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ABSTRACT

Based on a study of the Free Library's current operations, including its financial support, expenditure, facilities, usage, staff, organizational structure, administrative proceedings, goals, objectives, and specific functions, a long-range plan for the library within the framework of Philadelphia's municipal finance limitations is developed. An outside consultant outlines a future program for the 1980's with five focal points: (1) a Knowledge Workshop and Resource Center for out-of-school adults; (2) a Reading and Media Center for Young People; (3) a series of small adult materials centers in local communities tailored to predominant local interests; (4) a People's University; and (5) a computerized City and Community Information Center. Present library services to be curtailed are also identified, including provision of study and assignment materials for school students, acquisition of light diversional material for leisure-time reading, and maintenance of adult nonfiction and fiction collections in branches. Examination of computerized information in the future program of the Free Library, with consideration of bibliographic, information, and full text databases, precedes a final section discussing implementation of the plan in two stages. The report provides separate prefaces for city and library officials and two appendices. (ESR)

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THE FREE LIBRARY

and

THE REVITALIZATION OF PHILADELPHIA

A Program for the 1980's

Lowell A. Martin - Director

Faith McDowell - Research Associate

Nancy Magnuson - Research Assistant

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PREFACE FOR CITY OFFICIALS

Given the present state of municipal finances in Philadelphia, city officials naturally look into any study of a city agency to see where money can be saved. Limitations in funds available have definitely been taken into account in this study of The Free Library, and in fact this was the reason the Trustees of the Library commissioned the project.

At the same time, the consultant brought in has not simply looked around to see what could be cut out of The Free Library. If a city wants, for example, to discontinue providing children with reading and related material, or to deprive businesses and small industries of information used for decision-making, or to take library service away from some neighborhoods, these are decisions for officials and residents to make. It is not the task of an outside consultant to tell people what they should do without.

What has been done in this case is first to identify the functions of the Library that are essential to Philadelphia in its next period of revitalization. These have been judged to be the primary needs of the City:

- industries with resources to survive and thrive in Philadelphia

- workers trained and retrained to fill the jobs provided by a strengthened industrial base and by expanding service organizations
- neighborhoods in which people want to live

Library service contributes to each of these -- if it is maintained at an adequate level.

The once-strong Free Library has been sorely weakened in the past ten years. If city officials do not believe this, they should take ten minutes to run through the section of the report entitled "The Free Library Today." Or, better yet, they should try to take their families to a branch library on a Saturday. The agency is simply not able to deliver; its record of "misses" in providing what people seek is mounting, indicating a severe batting slump.

Accordingly, a program is proposed here that concentrates the remaining resources on essentials, bringing them up to standard. Concentrate and strengthen is the underlying theme. Decide what is most important to do, and do it well enough that Philadelphia will be a better place in which to work and live.

The result will not be a reduction in the Library's budget. There is no magic by which you can get more for less. This is not a plan for saving the City one million dollars or five million dollars in library costs. What is presented here is a plan to enable The Free Library, with appropriations that keep up with inflation, to directly help the City in this next critical

period, to play its unique part in the Philadelphia all seek to achieve.

The need for adequate library service in the well-being of the City is not as tangible and pressing as the need for safe streets. It can be ignored or given a low priority. But its importance is not missed by the 600,000 Philadelphians who use The Free Library each year (more individuals than go to public schools or parks or hospitals or museums).

Government officials will have to decide what importance they attach to library service. The people have already reached a conclusion. Try to close a branch library and you get the answer. To the surprise of librarians as well as city officials, when library service was cut in New York City, in a public-opinion poll conducted by the Comptroller's Office more than one-third of the people who wanted improvements in libraries said they would be willing to have their taxes raised in order to accomplish this. In California since Proposition 13, locality after locality has found ways to keep up funds for the public library; for example, Berkeley in a referendum voted 29,899 to 13,222 to restore the library budget to its previous level (Library Journal, July, 1980, p.1451). As one resident put it: "When we voted for Proposition 13, we didn't mean the public library."

The decision is in the hands of city officials. In reaching a conclusion, it is hoped that they will keep in mind the small

businessman seeking to understand the conditions he faces, the unemployed person preparing for a job, the parents looking for material on raising a family and maintaining a home, the neighborhood leader devising a local self-improvement project, and the teenager hanging out on the street corner.

PREFACE FOR LIBRARY OFFICIALS AND STAFF MEMBERS

The Free Library finds itself at the convergence of several sets of forces:

- internal weakness in the Library as the result of a decade of financial constraints
- uncertainties in the economic vitality and future of Philadelphia
- a municipal government faced with stringent measures to stay solvent
- demographic changes and conflicts, resulting in shifts of residents, in the influx of new people, and in some cases in neighborhood instability
- the emergence of new distribution patterns and new technology in the provision of reading materials and information, the commodities which the Library provides

Library officials and staff members know even better than library users the result of these various forces on The Free Library: decline in use (which began before the constraints on funds), depleted collections, reduction in hours of service, lay-off of staff, what one librarian characterizes as "shallow" reference service, scarcity of audiovisual resources, limited experience with computerized information. The shortcomings are most evident in the branches, which are trying to do too much with too little. The institution is drifting, living off its past strength.

Without significant redirection, the situation will not get

better. The solution to the Library's problems is not a straightforward request for a doubling of funds from the City, because this would not be granted, sympathetic as municipal officials appear to be toward the Library. While increased state and federal aid should not be ruled out, the prospects are not promising.

It is not an overstatement to say that city libraries in the northeast are entering a period of survival. New York City has just issued an RFP (Request for Proposal for a Study) which includes the following observation: "... it is not beyond possibility to question whether a tax-levy financed library system is still a proper municipal responsibility."

Library officials and library staff have no choice except to stand back and consider the essential mission of The Free Library and to decide what is most important for Philadelphia as the City enters a critical decade in its life. The time is past for business as usual, or for hoping to return to the old days of the 1960's, which would not be desirable for today's needs even if it were possible. But equally the time is past for cutting all along the line, for this is the road to ineffectuality.

A new design is needed. This does not mean radical and novel activities -- on the contrary, the Library should do what it has shown the capacity to do. But it does mean a clarification of mission, a selection of priorities, a targeting of effort, and a relinquishing of that which is not essential to Philadelphia

at this point in its history. Concentrate and strengthen must be the theme. The alternative is continued drift and decline.

Despite cutbacks, The Free Library has retained its core of strength. The agency has responsible administration, service-minded staff, collections of some scope, and buildings not yet in serious disrepair. The Library also retains a measure of public approval and support.

The second section of this report, "A Program for the Future," proposes focussing in these next years on development of five functions of The Free Library in which it has shown capacity to perform and which Philadelphia needs if it is to become the City that all want to achieve. Further, these priority functions are to be projected outward from the Library, brought conveniently into the lives of people, thus bridging the physical and psychological gap that exists between the Library and many individuals.

On the other hand, the "Program" also proposes de-emphasis on or elimination of several functions which are given lower priority. These latter now consume approximately 35 percent of library expenditures. In essence, the plan calls for shifting the money and time that now go into the latter services over to those judged to be essential.

This program can be carried out without substantial increases in money. A special grant will be needed to get computerized information service off the ground. The remainder of the

recommended program can be supported with internal shifts of personnel and funds, assuming city appropriations keep up with inflation.

Library officials and staff members will be studying these proposals. They do not have a responsibility to approve the recommendations but they do have a responsibility to approach them with an open mind. While this is not so tight a plan that rejection of any one part will negate the whole structure, there is an interrelationship among parts that should be understood before the package is judged. The one response that will not be constructive will be to agree with the priority functions but to insist that the others must also be retained and given substantial attention, because this will put the Library back into its present bind.

Declining resources are pushing The Free Library to the sidelines. The program proposed here will bring the institution back into the march for a better Philadelphia. From a purely personal standpoint, every library official and staff member will feel more valuable and more effective as a participant in rather than as an observer of the march forward.

I. THE FREE LIBRARY TODAY

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THE FREE LIBRARY AT A TURNING POINT

Twenty-five years ago an ambitious capital and service improvement program was projected for The Free Library of Philadelphia. The plan called for full subject departmentation in the Central Library, several research collections, a business library, large regional centers in the several main sections of the city, branch library buildings in most neighborhoods, and bookmobile service in pockets not covered by branches. Together the various units were to serve the whole range of purposes for which people turn to printed and related materials: research, education, information, recreation, cultural experience, inspiration. Staff and collections were to be at a level commensurate with these comprehensive goals.

Significant parts of the grand design were achieved through the 1960's, when The Free Library emerged as one of the distinctive city libraries in the country. Ten branches and a regional library were built between 1950 and 1970. Staff increased in the same period from 631 to 856, including subject specialists, children's librarians, young adult (teenage) workers, adult service librarians, reference staff, a group of acquisition and catalog librarians, all backed up by a corps of service coordinators. Annual expenditures rose from $2,619,451 in 1955 to $10,112,149 in 1970, almost a four-fold increase in a period of

limited inflation. Funds for books and other library materials increased from $369,819 to $1,296,159 during the same years. The position of the Library was further reinforced by participation in a state-wide library development plan, which provided some $600,000 annually to build resources and maintain service (separate from state funds for the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and for coordinating services for libraries in counties outside Philadelphia).

Then beginning in 1970 the rate of annual increase of funds turned downward. In prior years there had been enough money to maintain what had already been achieved and at the same time to take further development steps. In the last ten years, it has been difficult to maintain quality in the existing program, much less to continue and complete the grand design. What increases in support were obtained were more than absorbed by mounting inflation.

Yet, despite budget crunches, an effort was made to continue the full service program of the Library, seeking to be all things to all people. And the capital improvement program was continued, with two additional regional centers and seven branches constructed in the last decade, the last of these opening in November, 1980. In a sense, the owner acquired new houses even though he was not able to properly furnish those he already had.

All this occurred during a decade when the population of Philadelphia was steadily declining, industrial plants were closing, some neighborhoods were deteriorating, and city budgets were increasingly unbalanced.

The result of these combined circumstances was inevitable. The grand structure stood, and in fact the framework was expanded, while service -- what people got from their libraries -- declined. Here are some of the highlights:

- Staff reduced by 22 percent since 1970, from 856 to 666 [1]

  Staff in 1980 is only 35 more than in 1955, despite opening of 17 branches and 3 regional libraries in the interval

  Each Central subject department down by two or more staff members

  No teenage librarians in branches or the Central Library[2]

  Shortages in the acquisition and cataloging divisions resulting in books purchased and received but waiting to be prepared for use

- Hours of service cut overall by 17 percent since 1970

  No branches open on Saturday

  Seven branches without any evening hours

  Eighteen branches down to four days a week

  Central Library down from five to three evenings open per week

- Book funds reduced from 13.8 percent to 9.4 percent of library expenditures since 1970

  Average cost per book published has increased from $11.66 to $22.80 in the same period

  Some branches down to $5,000 for all acquisitions -- reference books, adult materials, children's publications, magazines subscriptions, recordings, which means no more than 100 adult books, an equal number of children's books, 25-30 magazine subscriptions, no new encyclopedias, no recordings [3]

- Bookmobile service eliminated; collections in hospitals and prisons eliminated

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1 Figures are for positions funded from general library revenues, not including CETA workers. CETA personnel has fluctuated in numbers, with some increase hoped for in 1981.

2 Exception in one branch, which has no children's librarian.

3 Funds down just when theft and mutilation of books increased, so that lost material in demand cannot be replaced.

Such general statistics do not tell the human story, the service not received by individuals when they go to the Library. As one test, a checklist of well-reviewed and popular publications of 1975 to 1979 was compiled on these topics: health and nutrition, child care, biographies, American history, sports, best sellers, self-help and current problems.

In a sample of 14 branches, exactly 29.5 percent of these titles could be found on the shelves. Over two out of three readers would come away empty-handed. Of the 128 titles on the list the average branch owned 55 percent. Of those owned 43.4 percent could be obtained at the time of a sample visit. A batting average of a little less than .300 may be good in baseball but it is not adequate in the provision of important and current books by a public library.

The Free Library is living off its past strength, and the reserve is steadily being depleted. A once-fine library simply is often not able to deliver when residents turn to their resource of recorded knowledge.

The policy of library authorities to this time in meeting the financial crunch has been to retain all service agencies and all kinds and levels of service, while cutting and trimming across the board. On the whole a judicious job has been done within this policy. But slippage has occurred, performance has been weakened, and the Library is now drifting. The body was starved, but its life style was not altered.

The Free Library continues to be overextended. There are too many mouths to feed, and all are short-rationed. The situation will not change unless more basic steps are taken, with some services dropped and other strengthened, and with adequate finances to restore and improve where essential.

Proposals by library authorities during the past year for closing some branches have been met with strong opposition, both from within communities and from city council representatives of the affected neighborhoods -- to the point where no closings have actually occurred. The reaction against closings was prompted both by specific concern about services that would be lost and by more general concern on the part of local residents about losing what is viewed in some communities as one of the very few remaining public institutions which they have -- a further threat to neighborhood life. On grounds of equity, piecemeal closing of branches in some neighborhoods but not in others can be challenged because it means removal of service from some people but not from others.

This is the situation at present. In broad terms, a city library of considerable strength finds itself short of funds, overextended in facilities and services, and uncertain which way to turn. Library authorities recognize the reality of the city budget crisis. At the same time they feel an obligation for a service that puts information into the economic life of the City, provides knowledge for Philadelphians to attain their

individual potential, and helps hold neighborhoods together. They sense that their institution is unable to do its job.

The Board of Trustees and the Director of the Library decided a year ago to review the situation. Rather than pursuing further shrinkage all along the line, they decided to take a hard look at the situation, to consider priorities, and to determine what must be done to regain strength still needed by Philadelphia -- in other words, to develop a long-range plan for guidance during the 1980's and into the 1990's. The present report is the result of that decision.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND EXPENDITURES

Eighty-five percent of the support of The Free Library comes from the City of Philadelphia. This local source will continue to be primary because of limited prospects for increases in state and federal library aid and limited prospects also for creation of a metropolitan library authority with taxing power. As the City goes, so goes The Free Library.

TABLE 1

SOURCES OF LIBRARY SUPPORT, 1980 [1]

Source	Amount	% of total
City funds	$17,598,702	85.5%
Appropriations - 13,498,627		
City services[2] - 4,100,075		
State funds for Local, District and Resource Service	1,562,575	7.6%
Federal funds		
CETA	592,630	2.9%
Grants	316,179	1.5%
Trust and other Private funds	508,163	2.5%
TOTAL	$20,578,249	100.0%

1 Funds for the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and for District Services for Delaware County are not included because these are state-wide and out-of-Philadelphia services for which the Commonwealth pays.

2 Covers pensions, insurance and utilities

The government of Philadelphia has been under constricted financial circumstances for a decade. The underlying cause is economic, particularly the loss of industry and industrial jobs in a city that had a manufacturing base. Since 1970, 150,000 jobs or more have been lost in the manufacturing sector. Fifteen percent of the city's families are on public assistance and there are over 25,000 abandoned buildings.[1] This has been accompanied by declining population and communi y deterioration in some parts of older Philadelphia. The pattern is characteristic of various northeastern cities.

At the same time, Center City shows continued vitality in the construction of additional office, retail, hotel, and apartment space. Some community rehabilitation has occurred, most conspicuously in what have become middle and upper-income neighborhoods. The cultural life of the city remains rich and varied. The emerging spirit is reflected in a statement by the Mayor after the Philadelphia Phillies won the world series: "I think the people have a good view of their city now. One of our citizens has won the Nobel Prize this year, we have a great orchestra, and we're seeing a turnaround in jobs."

The city government has recently sought to create a hospitable environment for business. A comprehensive plan stresses an adequate supply of undeveloped land for new small-scale industry, financial assistance for individual firms, and inner-city industrial development.

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1 Hershberg, Theodore. "Matching needs and resources in the eighties." paper delivered at the Community Needs and Resources Seminars, Philadelphia, November 19, 1980

Particular attention is presently being given to improvement of older local shopping centers and to improvement of the highway and public transportation systems[1] to facilitate the movement of people and goods. But the problem goes beyond government action alone. A forum organized by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia concluded that "Private enterprise is the crucial factor in determining Philadelphia's economic future."[2]

It is too soon to conclude whether the positive or the negative factors will prevail -- Center City development on the one side or the continued loss of manufacturing jobs on the other, neighborhood decline on the one hand or efforts to improve the quality of local life on the other. What is clear is that much rides on the outcome, and that every positive force -- including library service -- must be enlisted in the effort.

Problems of Library Support

Over the decade of the 1970's, with threats to its well-being and constrictions on public funds, the City has shifted the focus of where it puts its money. Services to protect people and to preserve the physical environment have received first call, while

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1 Philadelphia City Planning Commission. Issues for the 1980's. The Commission, 1979, p. 9

2 FED Forums. Finding Solutions to Philadelphia's Economic Problems. Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, 1979. p. 1

the library has suffered. The percentage of total city expenditures accorded to the Free Library slipped from 1.8 percent in 1970 to 1.6 percent in 1979 (the last year for which actual expenditures are available). During the same years the percentage for police increased from 13.4 to 17.7 percent.[1] The Library receives just about two-thirds as much as goes to parks and recreation. Parallel changes have occurred in number of staff members: the library is down, but recreation, police and corrections are up.[2]

In dollar amounts, The Free Library gained at an average annual rate of seven percent from city appropriations and services over the past decade. The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the average annual inflation rate during the 1970's was 11 percent, and was substantially higher in the last two years. An equivalent increase is reported in the cost of both hardback and paperback books during the same period.[3]

Put simply, inflation outstripped the gains in support which the Library received. Then in 1979 the city funds given the Library went down, the first actual drop in over a quarter-century.

Financial assistance from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for local library service has not increased appreciably since 1973.

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1 City operating budgets, 1970 and 1979.

2 Pennsylvania Economy League. A review of municipal personnel trends in the past quarter century. The League, 1980.

3 Bowker Annual of Library and Book Trade Information, 1980. p. 451-52.

TABLE 2
SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT, 1970-1980[1]

SOURCE	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
City funds											
Direct (excluding CETA)	$7,259,799	7,386,551	7,812,453	7,880,690	8,339,721	9,606,075	10,779,662	11,022,922	13,216,841	12,493,885	13,498,627
Indirect (benefits, utilities, etc.)	$1,182,919	1,370,628	1,590,776	1,714,807	2,202,324	2,387,385	2,706,599	2,936,066	3,568,361	3,465,815	4,100,075
CETA and other general Federal funds for staff			$139,608	326,839	145,664	161,052	295,249	334,365	691,798	683,180	592,630
State funds for local, district and resource service	$600,628	600,628	1,257,184	1,416,694	1,515,979	1,562,575	1,551,455	1,562,575	1,562,575	1,562,575	1,562,575
Federal grant funds	$118,057	255,065	298,538	317,992	132,126	227,031	146,523	142,006	105,728	57,378	316,179
Trust and other private funds	$258,622	194,457	282,754	240,278	271,273	267,818	361,197	546,578	608,588	450,411	508,163
Total	$9,456,025	9,807,329	11,381,313	11,897,300	12,607,087	14,211,936	15,840,685	16,544,512	19,753,891	18,713,244	21,578,249

[1] Funds for Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and for District Services for Delaware County are not included because these are state-wide and out-of-Philadelphia services for which the Commonwealth pays.

State support for The Free Library's activities as a resourse center for Pennsylvania has actually decreased since 1970. Putting inflation into the picture, the State is supporting local service in Philadelphia and service which The Free Library of Philadelphia renders to the metropolitan area and to the state at a distinctly lower level than it did a few years ago. Philadelphia is now subsidizing some of the state-wide obligations it has under the Pennsylvania plan for library service.

Four factors therefore account for the present financial bind on The Free Library:

- Decade-long race with inflation
- Reduction in the rate of increase in city funds, and an actual dollar reduction in 1979
- Failure of the State to keep up an adequate level of funding under the Pennsylvania library plan
- Additional branches opened even though existing units were short of books and staff.

The new city administration inaugurated at the beginning of 1980 has sought to be fiscally responsible. The first effort is to bring municipal income and outlay into balance. Some progress has been made on this, but serious pressures remain. The city administration is making plans for both industrial growth and neighborhood rehabilitation. It remains to be seen whether these efforts go beyond the physical framework to the human core that will make advances real and permanent. Roads and housing are essential, but the foundation is trained workers, business people with the information to make sound decisions, and services that make people want to stay in and rebuild their neighborhoods.

Whether city officials will come to recognize in The Free Library not just a free bookstore and a remote reservoir for occasional scholars but a source of knowledge for the whole fabric of economic, social and private life is still uncertain, but the outcome will affect success or failure in revitalizing Philadelphia.

The budget of The Free Library is based on a few broad categories of expenditure -- essentially salaries, library materials, and other operating expenses. The trends in relative expenditures among these three categories are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

FREE LIBRARY EXPENDITURES BY MAJOR CATEGORIES, 1970-1980 [1]

Total	Staff Salaries and Benefits		Library Materials		Operating Expenses		Total
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	
1970	7,739,111	76.6	1,296,159	12.8	1,076,879	10.6	10,112,149
1971	8,595,765	81.8	912,274	8.7	993,895	9.4	10,501,934
1972	9,268,231	81.0	900,070	7.9	1,263,011	11.0	11,431,312
1973	9,719,839	75.3	1,790,953	13.8	1,393,043	10.8	12,903,835
1974	10,522,863	79.3	1,240,488	9.3	1,505,388	11.3	13,268,739
1975	11,315,564	75.4	1,859,152	12.4	1,830,642	12.2	15,005,718
1976	13,083,715	76.6	1,740,347	10.5	1,810,548	10.9	16,634,610
1977	13,895,821	80.4	1,751,066	10.1	1,644,859	9.5	17,291,746
1978	16,327,988	79.8	2,069,181	10.1	2.061,202	10.0	20,458,372
1979	15,421,569	79.9	1,800,698	9.3	2,077,786	10.7	19,360,053
1980	17,529,101	82.1	2,017,841	9.4	1,809,074	8.5	21,356,036

1 Includes Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and District Services

As funds became constricted in the last decade, allocations for library materials were the first to suffer. In purchasing power relative to the actual cost of books, The Free Library today has thirty percent less than it had in 1970. Operating expenses held up in dollar amounts and in percentage of outlays until the last year or so, when this portion also turned down. Proportionately it is staff expenditures that have gained, and this despite a reduction in number of staff positions. Eighty-two percent of the library's funds now go to this category, over four of every five dollars spent.

Whether the wisest policies prevailed in the face of financial limitations is a moot point. Book funds are easiest to cut, while staff salaries and heating and maintenance of buildings must go on. Library officials sought to retain the essential corps of trained staff, in hope for the day when money for materials and other purposes would be restored. Another pressure in this direction has been union contract agreements on such matters as fringe benefits and overtime pay for work on Saturdays and Sundays. Expenditures for staff have held up to the point where the books which people seek are not purchased and leaking roofs are not repaired. If this trend continues the agency will have staff members but no materials to enable them to carry out their jobs.

Library service as presently conceived and organized has always been labor-intensive. Paradoxically, as funds become short, this is more rather than less the case. As users cannot find what they seek on the depleted shelves, they turn to librarians for help, who struggle to locate substitute sources amoung older publications in the collection. In this next period, libraries must either move more toward self-service structures or see their impact blunted by mounting personnel costs.

Because The Free Library builds budgets and records expenditures only in the broad categories of staff, materials, and operating expenses, figures are not maintained for the cost of the various functions and services of the agency. It was necessary to calculate such breakdowns by means of a rather laborious process. The results of part of the analysis are shown in Table 4. There figures are as accurate as possible from the records available, aided by helpful interpretation on the part of the Budget Officer of the Library. The extensive notes to the table explain the process and allocations involved.

TABLE 4

FREE LIBRARY EXPENDITURES BY SERVICE,

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT CATEGORIES, 1980

	Total Cost [1]	Percentage of total
16 Central Public Departments, including Mercantile Business Library	$5,080,263	26.2%
3 Regional Libraries	2,706,182	14.0
49 Branches	6,927,706	35.8
Coordinating and Educational Services (including Reader Development)	1,028,431	5.3
Processing (Acquisitions, Cataloging, Bindery)	1,569,933	8.1
General Administration (Offices of the Director, Deputy Director, Administrative Services, Accounting, Personnel, Public Relations and Duplicating)	1,010,885	5.2
Shipping, Supplies, Buildings Department	950,566	4.9
Interlibrary Loan	95,704	.5
GRAND TOTAL	$19,369,670 [2]	100.0%

1 Costs for each category include salaries, fringe benefits, library materials, and operating costs and utilities, and security for Central Departments, Regional libraries and branches.

2 Total does not include expenditures for Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, CETA workers or District Service to Delaware County. Therefore, the grand total is different from that shown in the FY80 Annual Report.

NOTES FOR ALLOCATIONS IN TABLE 4

1. Salaries and fringe benefits
   a. salaries are calculated for all filled positions in FY80, exclusive of CETA workers
   b. fringe benefits are calculated at 30 percent
2. Library materials
   a. the total includes all money for all three age levels, from all funding sources -- city, state, and private
   b. in FY80, Northwest Regional Library, and Eastwick, Mantua, Haverford and Ogontz branches were given large amounts of capital funds in code 306. Because this would give an untypical picture of funding for branch library materials, the four branches were excluded from the branch total. The FY81 code 306 figure was used for NWRL to show the approximate amount a regional library would receive for materials
3. Operating expenses and utilities
   a. operating expenses: as of 6-30-80 there were 787 filled positions at The Free Library (excluding CETA workers and Eastwick, but including Haverford and Mantua). The Accounting Department determined that approximately $611,345 had been spent in FY80 on operating expenses such as office supplies and maintenance costs. By dividing $611,345 by 787 we got a figure of $766.80 which could be used as a rough estimate of the amount spent for operating expenses for each employee. By multiplying $766.80 by the number of employees in each unit, we arrived at an approximation of operating expenses for that unit
   b. utilities: the Accounting Department furnished a figure of $687,505 which is the estimated amount spent by the City of Philadelphia for The Free Library's utilities in FY80. Utilities include items such as electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning, rent, telephone service and water. The utilities cost (less rent) was divided by the total square footage of all owned and open Free Library buildings -- 793,468 square feet. This produces a figure of .83 cents per square foot expended for utilities. By multiplying this amount by the square footage of a particular department, office, branch, etc. the utilities cost of that unit was estimated
4. Central Public Departments
   As well as the subject, form, and research departments in the Central building, this category also includes Mercantile, the Office of the Chief, the loan desk and the bookstacks in calculating cost for salaries, materials, operating expenses and utilities. The costs of the Overdues section are divided among the Central Public Departments, the three regional libraries and the branches in proportion to their percentage of the total circulation. In addition, salaries, benefits and operating expenses for Buildings Department people who work exclusively at Central are included, but not their utilities cost
5. Regionals and Branches
   a. in calculating the Regionals' cost for salaries and operating expenses, costs for the area administrators' offices and the area coordinators are not included. Cost for the area administrators are added to branch costs. Area coordinators are included under coordinating services
   b. the costs of running the Extension Office are divided between Regionals and branches on the basis of each one's percentage of total Regional and branch staff costs.
6. Shipping and Supplies, Buildings Department
   this category includes the salaries and expenses of those members of the Buildings Department who work for both the Central Library and Extension Division agencies

Almost three-quarters of library expenditures go into direct service -- staff in contact with users, the books and other materials made available to them, and the maintenance of the space which users and service staff occupy. The remainder of expenditures goes into a variety of behind-the-scenes and support operations. This is not out of balance, considering the wide range covered by the several support categories, from the director's office to the cataloging of acquisitions, from shipping among branches to interlibrary loan from other libraries. The Free Library cannot be criticized as top-heavy in non-service administrative personnel.

The million dollars spent for coordinating and educational services deserves a word of explanation. The Offices of the Coordinator of Work with Adults and Young Adults and the Coordinator of Work with Children perform a variety of service support activities. The staffs of these units make the initial selection of books for the Library, initiate and promote educational services throughout the system, prepare grant proposals to get money to carry out special projects, work with personnel in the field, engage to some extent in training activities, and supervise several projects of their own. Included in the total for this category is $91,000 for the Reader Development Program. The Coordinating Offices can be credited with planning and furthering many of the distinctive educational programs of The Free Library. At the same time, it must be noted that they have been maintained at close to full strength while such immediate matters as hours of public service and purchase of materials to

carry out educational activities have been cut.

Processing costs (for ordering, acquiring, cataloging and shelf preparation) of close to $10.00 per item acquired is on the high side, particularly for a library that orders many duplicates of titles. However, this figure includes several activities -- recording of serials, de-accessioning of items discarded, etc.-- that could not be separated from the total. Analysis of processing policies and methods was not part of the present project because a new computerized system is just now getting underway, but the past high unit-cost figure suggests that acquisition procedures and cataloging practices should be reviewed before being incorporated into any new system. Whether processing will be less expensive under computerization remains to be seen.

Included in the expenditures is an item of $202,000 for overdues (including salaries, fringe benefits, operating expenses and utilities); this has been allocated among the three service levels according to proportion of circulation in each. Despite this sizable cost, the overdue function in The Free Library has obviously not been fulfilling its purpose. Notices of circulated books kept out beyond the loan period do not go out for up to ten months after the books are due. After this interval, borrowers may have moved, some cannot find the books, and those who can anticipate a large fine if the material is returned. The result is serious loss of books, often the titles most in demand. The present project does not include analysis of internal operations, but clearly this malfunction needs corrections. No doubt shortage

TABLE 5

FREE LIBRARY EXPENDITURES AMONG LEVELS OF DIRECT SERVICE, 1980

Level of Service	Salaries and Fringe Benefits	Materials Collections	Operating Expenses and Utilities	Total	Percentage of Total
Central Public Departments [1]	$3,926,483	$834,503	$319,277	$5,080,263	34.5
Regional Libraries [2]	2,234,998	314,000	157,184	2,706,182	18.4
Branches [3]	5,765,832	586,348	576,526	6,927,706	47.1
TOTAL	$11,926,313	$1,778,851	$1,052,987	$14,714,151	100.0

1 Includes Office of Chief, subject and form departments, research departments, Mercantile Library, loan desk, and bookstacks, security and maintenance, plus portion of overdues based on circulation.

2 Includes portion of Central Extension Office and of overdues; excludes area administrative offices and area coorinators.

3 Includes portion of Central Extension Office and of overdues, and also four area administrative offices; but excludes area coordinators who are listed under separate heading for Coordinating Services.

of personnel enters the picture, but there still are 11 staff members in the overdues unit. The problem is of such import, and it has continued for such a period of time, that it suggests both faulty methods and administrative neglect. The automated record system to be developed over the next few years will help control overdues, but it hardly seems justified to allow the bloodletting to go on for even this period.

Taking the direct public service departments alone (separate from general administration, processing, coordinating services, etc.), just under one-third of service expenditures go to Central public departments, not quite one-fifth to regional libraries, and almost one-half to branches. There is no way to compare this distribution with libraries in other cities because they -- like The Free Library -- do not break down expenditures. Given the present service plan and organization in Philadelphia, the allocations are reasonable and defensible. The regional libraries, as shown in this breakdown, are relatively expensive units, costing $900,000 per year on the average, as compared with $140,000 - $150,000 for the average branch.

Future proportions of expenditures among major categories of direct service will depend on the purposes and programs adopted for the several levels. The re-deployment of functions proposed in this report will result in some greater relative emphasis on the Central Library and on regionals, but it would be a mistake to interpret this as reducing the importance of the branches; rather the latter will concentrate on services that can best be provided

at this level, and will not try to function at a level that requires extensive and expensive collections.

SERVICE FACILITIES IN THE SYSTEM

The three-tier structure of public library service in Philadelphia is theoretically sensible in terms of where people live and how they use libraries: nearby neighborhood branches for children and for adults with general reading interests, regional libraries at some distance for both formal and informal students, and the Central Library for advanced readers and specialists. In practice this theoretical structure becomes blurred: local branches try to maintain balanced subject collections as though they were smaller versions of regional units, regional libraries are a mixture of subject and popular collections, and the central unit serves casual readers looking for "a good book" as well as systematic readers pursuing subject interests in some depth. The blurring and overlap among the several levels makes users uncertain as to what is where, and tempts each level to take on peripheral functions better left to another kind of service unit.

The three-level structure should be retained because it has a practical rationale. Cutting out any one level would only shift functions to the remaining levels, further away from people, and at no saving in cost. But the plan set forth later in this report proposes a sharper differentiation of purposes and

activities among branch, regional and central units, eliminating or reducing the peripheral functions that each has accumulated.

In the face of financial limitations, the Central Library and the branches have become competitors for the funds available. Both community representatives and branch librarians claim that the main unit has been protected and favored. In terms of reductions in hours of service and number of staff members, there is some justification for this charge. But the Central Library has also had cuts in staff and in book funds, and decisions made can be defended as preserving the total system.

The Central Library is more than an agency for a separate group of specialized users and the location of offices of general administrators. In the system, it coordinates book selection in all agencies, prepares books for use in branches as well as regionals and the main collection, backs up local resources by temporary lending of titles on request, and handles the most difficult reference and research inquiries from both branches and regionals. Reduction of resources and services in Central hurts the branch clientele as well as users at Logan Square.

How well do the several levels work as a system? Certainly the Central Library performs supporting activities for the outlying units. The book selection procedure provides control over the different types of collections. Working up from localities, users are referred as needed to the regional and central units. On the

other hand, it has already been pointed out that the three levels overlap and are not clearly differentiated, there is a considerable range of resources that the user can get at any level, and this is not confined to the popular books of the moment. In addition, the branches seek to answer inquiries that could more readily be handled by telephoning a central source. And the flow of books for temporary loan from larger to smaller units is quite modest.

The principle that should apply is that services should be centralized as much as possible while still remaining accessible to people, as against the prevailing principle of bringing services and resources as close as possible to people even though material stands unused on the shelves in anticipation of possible demand which may or may not materialize. Another result of seeking to bring as wide a range of service as possible close to people is that graduate librarians are assigned to branches in anticipation of demands for professional guidance that actually occupy the trained staff for only a portion of their time, the remainder of their time going to non-professional tasks, including the shelving of books. Personnel deployment that does not use the special abilities of highly-skilled staff members most of their time on the job is poor organization and wastes money, whether in business firms, hospitals, schools, or libraries. Probably every library study of the past 20 years makes some variation of this observation, but underutilization of the capacities of graduate-trained librarians continues as though it is an incurable disease.

In the three-tier service structure, the branches are least clear as to purpose and function. If funds were unlimited, each would evidently try to become as close as it could to a regional library within the confines of its four walls. The long-range plan proposes a significant focussing of the purposes and clientele of the branch libraries.

Central Library

The substantial main building of The Free Library stands as one of the monumental structures on the Parkway. A renovation program over the last few years has maintained the building physically and air conditioning was installed recently.

The Central Library is located just far enough away from the main business and retail center of Philadelphia to require a special trip by most users. As a result, the volume of use -- some 48,000 visitors per month, 1600-1700 on an average day -- is substantial but is not as large as would hold in a more central location. As another result, The Free Library must maintain two additional facilities for service within the central area, a business unit (Mercantile Library) and a popular-reading branch (Philadelphia City Institute).

Once the user enters the Central Library, this large building is not easy to use. It does not follow the more recent and functional design of placing as many service divisions as possible

on the first level in an arrangement that can be readily grasped by the visitor. Rather it has a substantial entrance hall, a monumental stairway, and most subject departments on the second floor. Recently-installed directional signs give some help in locating service departments. A directional desk is not maintained in the entrance hall. Some printed folders locating departments and describing their collections are available, but users find relatively little guidance until they get to the second floor. Then they must often ask staff members where to turn, thus adding to the labor-intensive nature of library service. The long-range plan proposes a concerted effort toward a self-service library, a logical second step after the first step of putting most books on open shelves which was taken many years ago.

Public service is given in the Central Library in fourteen departments. One is a general information unit. Seven are "subject" departments (music--art--literature--social science--education, philosophy, religion--business, science, industry--fiction). Three are organized around nonbook forms of materials (Films--Prints and Pictures--Microfilms including magazines and newspapers). Two are specialized collections (Rare Books and the Fleischer Collection of music scores), and one is a Children's Room. Smaller special collections are maintained on maps, automobiles and the theater.

One additional unit should be noted, the detached Mercantile Library for service to business, located in the retail-financial

center of the City. It provides information sources and subject treatises of value in the financial, insurance, retail and related business community. The Mercantile also has a floor level devoted to popular reading and a small general nonfiction collection. Thus it is a detached duplicate of a few parts of the main center, maintained for the convenience of enterprises, workers and visitors in the central district. Here again the long-range plan recommends a concentration of function, strengthening of business and government services in Mercantile, and corresponding reduction of the duplicate business section of the Central Library.

The subject departments are designed to provide somewhat specialized service within their areas. Collections for the most part fall somewhere at the undergraduate level or at a comparable level in subjects not typically in the college curriculum. Somewhat more specialized holdings occur in selected topics designated by the State (philosophy, religion, criminology, insurance, postal communications, costume, folklore, anthropology and biology, and aspects of the arts, literature, history and geography) for which The Free Library serves as a state-wide resource and receives annual appropriations from the Commonwealth. Even these fields have had only limited additions in recent years. On the whole, the main collection has considerable breadth but only moderate depth. With only a few exceptions, this is not a research library as in major universities or highly specialized collections, and there is neither the need nor the practical possibility for it to become so.

The subject plan is meant to provide distinct units for followers of particular interests, with appropriate collections and staff. Several factors work against the concept of neat, functional units for distinct groups of readers. As a start, the interests of some users cut across the departmental divisions, so that they have to use several departments to achieve their purposes. Furthermore, due to changing classification numbers assigned by the Library of Congress to the same subjects (as a result of changes in classification codes seeking to keep up with changes in knowledge), closely-related publications end up in different departments; Free Library catalogers could rectify this, and keep like materials together, but only at the considerable expense of reviewing all classification numbers assigned by central agencies and changing those not in accordance with past local practice. Finally, it has often not proved feasible to assign personnel with relevant subject backgrounds to the various units, so that the subject-department plan is not consistently staffed with subject librarians. One subject department head reports: "We have no one with anything but general knowledge of the subject areas for which we are responsible."

The form divisions pose a different problem. They were established because prints and films and newspapers--magazines each require different methods of handling, shelving, and storing. Putting them into separate units relieves the subject librarians of responsibility for these special methods--that is, it is a convenience for the librarian. But it is not a convenience for users. They may not know that the separate units exist, or if

they know of their existence they may not realize that prints or films or magazines have anything of value to their particular interest. Staff members may refer the inquirer to the form departments--if the user contacts the staff, and if the staff member remembers to make the connection.

As the organization now stands, many magazines on a given topic are located far separate from books on the same topic, films on art or travel or science are separate from publications covering the same fields, visual records of public events are separate from written accounts of the same events, pictorial material on a period of history or on a technical topic stands separate from the book collection. With staff short, the economy in handling time in bunching films, prints and magazines apart into disjointed units justifies this organization. But it creates another barrier which the user must get through, and does not make for a genuinely multimedia ibrary commensurate with a multimedia age. The Free Library is not just book-centered (which is appropriate to its mission) but it is insular in a vast body of print, with other media at the fringe, and this in a time when the main impersonal communication which people experience is visual (television) and when younger generations are being raised to use the various forms interchangably.

The dozen or more units in Central require substantial numbers of personnel to render service. At times when use is relatively small--morning and evening hours--a public desk must still be staffed in each. If a number of subject departments were smaller,

there would be some saving of staff, and at the same time more users would find all the material they need within one unit and separation of related books into different departments would be reduced.

The Central Library has a children's room, used primarily by the relatively small number of youngsters living near the main building. There is also a children's section in the branch on Rittenhouse Square. The Central Children's Department holds an historical collection of juvenile literature and material on children's reading for parents, teachers and other youth workers. There is a substantial collection for teachers of curriculum and general reading material for students in the nearby headquarters of the Philadelphia Board of Education. Once again questions arise of relations between The Free Library holdings and those of other Philadelphia collections.

The two distinctive research collections in The Free Library--Rare Books and The Fleischer Collection of musical scores--are the result of earlier gifts. Both are of a stature that attracts use from a distance, occasionally from other countries. They have private funds for acquisition of resources. Staff and maintenance costs come from general library funds, $282,000 for the two together (salaries, fringe benefits, operating expenses and utilities combined). Thus not much more than one percent of the Library's budget goes to these two special units, which are the pride of the institution. At the same time, it must be recognized that they are outside its primary purpose as an informational-

educational-cultural agency for the general public. These same points, on a lesser scale, can be made about the special Theatre and Automobile collections and the Drinker Collection of Choral Music, plus the observation that these latter three are relatively inaccessible to the public.

Regional Libraries

Several of the larger cities in the United States have established intermediate units in the form of regional centers to serve broad sections of the cities. They have adult nonfiction collections several times the size of those in branches (well over 100,000 volumes in the case of Philadelphia, as compared with 20,000-25,000 adult nonfiction volumes in the largest branches), and they provide extra facilities for study of materials on the premises. Resources at this level can handle a significant proportion of subject requests from advanced students and adults, thus relieving them of a trip to the Central Library, and at the same time reducing undue pressure on the smaller collections in the branches.

Regional outlets also serve as branches in their immediate neighborhoods. They have children's sections and provide leisure reading for adults. The nearby resident has these standard resources and in addition has the dividend of a large subject collection close at hand.

The three regional libraries in Philadelphia serve these purposes and have cut out a clear place in the service structure. People come to them from a considerable distance, although this is somewhat less true of the installations in West Philadelphia and Northwest Philadelphia because some of the outlying residents hesitate to go to areas which they consider unsafe. Annual circulation ranges from 468,779 in the Northeast unit to 104,935 in West Philadelphia, the latter figure actually less than for five community branches. The proportion of study on the premises, without necessarily taking books out for circulation, is high, so that the total volume of use in the several regionals is substantial. Professional staff available to the public in these agencies ranges from eight to twenty-one as compared with two professionals in most branches and only one in some. The purpose of these units is clear, they are equipped to carry out the purpose, and people have responded in numbers sufficient to justify the cost of at least two of the three.

The planner is tempted to consider eight or ten of these impressive units over the City, in place of many branches able to do only a fragmentary job. However, this would seriously limit service to two important groups, children who could not get to a regional library unless taken by their parents, and adults who do not travel much out of their immediate neighborhoods for services, which is particularly true of residents in low-income areas. The library would lose its community roots in this alternative, and local people would have one of the few remaining nearby public

services removed, thus weakening further the fabric of neighborhood life.

At the same time it is worth noting that the existence of regional centers permits modifications in what branches need to seek to do. People are now referred regularly from local outlets to the regional units; the latter stand as a not-too-distant back-up for local facilities. This relationship and inter-dependence can be pushed further. Attention is given in the proposed long-range plan later in this report to just what functions can be centered in the regional libraries, so that these resources and activities do not have to be repeated in partial and inadequate form in branch after branch.

North Philadelphia and South Philadelphia lack regional libraries. These sections are relatively near the Cental Library, and the assumption has been that this main unit can serve as back-up for branches within several miles. This assumption can be challenged. To begin with, the location of the main building out from the central retail and business district limits its access except to those with strong motivation and well-defined needs. As another factor, for the most part the residents of North and South Philadelphia are below average in income, which means that they are particularly dependent on public transportation, and the main building is well away from the subway and from a convergence of bus routes. Finally, once individuals of somewhat limited education get to the Central Library, many will find its size and organization intimidating and difficult to use. The

library on Logan Square is precisely not the kind of regional unit that should be established for residents of North and South Philadelphia. The long-range plan proposes that this gap be filled by building up two existing branches in these sections into regional libraries, but not necessarily regionals in the exact pattern of those already in existence.

Branch Libraries

Since World War II, The Free Library has built up an extensive system of 49 community branches, and the three regionals also serve as branches for their nearby neighborhoods. This is one outlet for each 32,700 residents. The four other cities in the United States with populations over one million (excluding New York because of its unusual density of population) serve more people with each branch, and Houston serves almost twice as many. This means that Philadelphia has an asset in footholds in more neighborhoods, closer to the people, if the branches have clear purposes and objectives which they can achieve, but--on the other hand--if these conditions do not hold, Philadelphia is overburdened with an unusually large number of branches. The number of branches needed depends on what is to be accomplished in them -- if, for example, they are to be

primarily subject libraries for adults they can stand several miles apart, for adults will travel a little distance to get functional materials they need, but if they are to serve children they must exist as at present in each local neighborhood.

TABLE 6

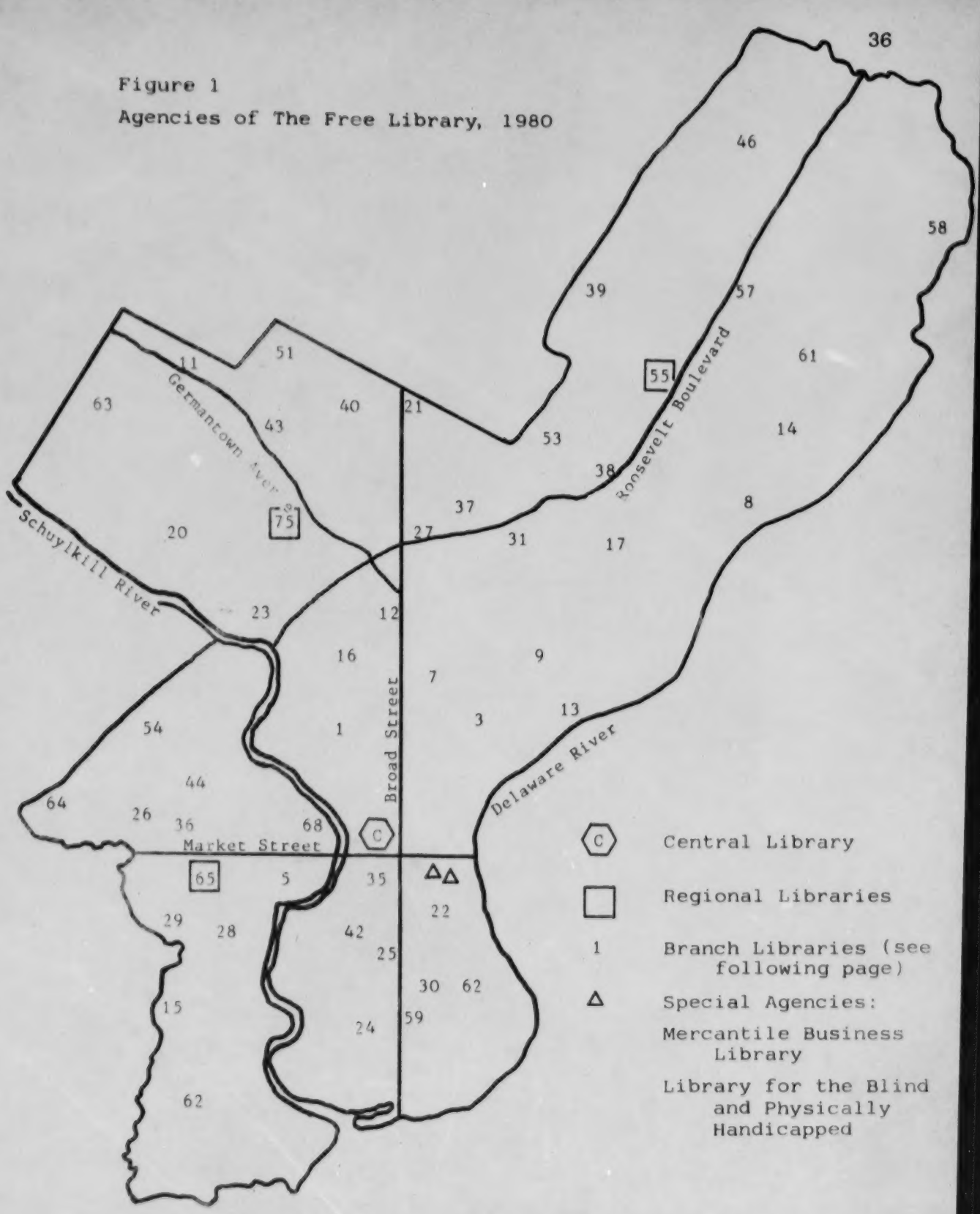
POPULATION SERVED PER BRANCH LIBRARY

Cities (in order of number of people served per branch)	Average Population Served per Branch [1]
Houston	60,633
Detroit	49,385
Los Angeles	46,658
Chicago	37,408
Philadelphia	32,700

1 Figures for the number of branch libraries in each city were taken from the American Library Directory, 32nd. ed. 1979; population figures are from the preliminary 1980 Census report.

Figure 1

Agencies of The Free Library, 1980



Agencies of The Free Library, by map number

1. Columbia Avenue
3. Kensington
5. Walnut Street West
7. Lehigh Avenue
8. Tacony
9. McPherson Square
11. Chestnut Hill
12. Nicetown-Tioga
13. Richmond
14. Holmesburg
15. Paschalville
16. Widener
17. Frankford
20. Roxborough
21. Oak Lane
22. Southwark
23. Falls of Schuylkill
24. Passyunk
25. South Philadelphia
26. Haddington
27. Logan
28. Kingsessing
29. Cobbs Creek
30. Greenwich
31. Wyoming
35. Philadelphia City Institute
36. Community
37. Greater Olney
38. Bushrod
39. Fox Chase
40. West Oak Lane
42. Queen Memorial
43. Lovett Memorial
44. George Institute
46. Bustleton
51. Wadsworth Avenue
53. Lawncrest
54. Wynnefield
57. Welsh Road
58. Katharine Drexel
59. Ritner Children's
60. Ramonita G. de Rodriguez
61. Torresdale
62. Whitman
63. Andorra
64. Overbrook Park
66. Haverford Avenue
67. Eastwick
68. Mantua

55. Northeast Regional Library
65. West Philadelphia Regional Library
75. Northwest Regional Library

Fifteen of the Philadelphia branches are Carnegie structures that date from earlier in the century. Some new buildings were added before World War II. New construction got underway again in the 1950's and continued through the 1970's, with a total of seventeen new branches opened in this period, the last of these was dedicated in December, 1980, and still another is on the drawing board.

The design of recent structures is modern and distinctive, with street-level entrances, and functional interiors in most instances. The older Carnegie buildings have been renovated and present open and attractive interiors. Maintenance of the various structures has been satisfactory until recently, with repairs and redecorating now starting to fall behind.

Location of the branches varies from excellent to marginal. One-half are in or near viable shopping areas, so that trips to the library can be combined with other business. Some are in or near shopping areas that have declined as neighborhoods have changed. At least a dozen stand fairly alone, sometimes along secondary streets, which deters use, particularly during evening hours. In most cases the branches are clearly identified as libraries by means of signs. On the other hand, many lack convenient parking.

Most of the branches are medium in size, somewhere in the 8,000-11,000 square foot range. This provides space for the "standard" program described below. The size of new buildings constructed over the last 20 years has remained much the same,

indicating that the conception of the purpose and scope of branches has also remained relatively unchanged. Size is varied very little even where it can safely be predicted from experience in similar neighborhoods that use of the standard program will be limited. The facades of the branch buildings present interesting variety, but the interiors are much the same in size and layout.

The same uniformity applies to the resources and services offered. In each branch there is a reference collection of moderate size--not small enough to function as a quick-reference source to be backed up by frequent contact with a regional center, nor large enough to cover the full range of typical local information interests. A fiction collection holds a selection of classical authors, some titles of established 20th century novelists, titles in demand for school book reports, and copies of yesterdays' best sellers. A parallel nonfiction section holds a more-or-less balanced subject collection, with one or a few titles on topics from philosophy to government to science to history.

Collections purchased from capital funds for new branches opened in the past ten years have primarily current publications, but older nonfiction collections are a mixture of current and out-of-date material. The effort to maintain viable subject collections is falling behind. Reports one branch librarian: "The whole nonfiction collection is shot" --another "Our adult reference collection is outdated, mutilated and wanting." The

question must be faced of whether restoring and maintaining the adult nonfiction collections in 49 branches would be a vain effort, involving large expenditures for relatively small use.

The children's section has considerable scope and appeal in all cases. Currency is not as critical here, and the outstanding juvenile publications have been purchased. On the other hand, the former young adult program has faded with the discontinuation of young adult librarians. Only a book case or two remains of titles specially recommended for teenagers, and in most cases these are little used.

Some effort is made to adjust collections to neighborhoods, but this applies to a very small portion of the resources. In one branch there may be more how-to material, in another more biography and travel, and in a few instances several shelves of books in Spanish. Record collections vary from quite extensive to quite limited. But the bulk of the collection is interchangeable from branch to branch.

In addition to the regular fiction and nonfiction collections, all branches maintain sections of new books (regular purchase and McNaughton acquisitions), racks of paperback books, and cases of mystery, romance and science fiction stories. These sections, usually given a prominent place, account for over half of adult use in most branches, and up to three-quarters in some.

Thus the branches aspire to be two types of agency for adults: a source for subject and cultural readers (a kind of smaller regional library), and a source for leisure-time readers (dispensing titles very much like those sold in general bookstores and on racks in supermarkets and other locations). Of the two functions, the subject and cultural collection predominates in space occupied, while the popular leisure-reading collection predominates in actual use. Titles in the latter category have a high turnover, moving in and out of readers' hands regularly, while many titles in what the librarians consider their basic collections of fiction and nonfiction stand unused on the shelves for long periods. The branches are more free bookstores for adults than functional libraries with defined purposes.

All branches maintain one service (reference) desk for adults and another for children. Thirty-six of the 49 outlets have two professionals to staff the two desks, but in 13 one librarian tries to serve both levels. In almost every instance, a genuine effort is made to help users and a friendly and constructive relationship grows up between staff and some clients. This is particularly true in the juvenile section, where the librarians become empathetic guides to some children. A special word of approval should go, on the one side, to the single librarian in lesser-used units, who must seek to be branch administrator and adult librarian and young adult (teenage) librarian and children's librarian all at once, and on the other side, to the administrators of the busiest branches who must

handle one level of direct service while also keeping the bustling operation going. An added load on many branch librarians is coping in one way or another with disruptive teenagers in the area.

Use of the branches varies widely in a ratio of one to five. Five units circulate fewer than 20,000 books a year, while on the other end five circulate more than 100,000. The lesser-used outlets tend to be in low-income, low-education neighborhoods. Whether this is because the "standard" pattern is not suitable to them or because of lack of need for and interest in information-educational services in such areas is hard to say, but relatively little adjustment has been made to reach inner-city areas. One factor in the difference in statistics is that by and large lower-income neighborhoods do not have the interest in current best sellers that characterizes the busiest units. The difference in children's attendance, in student use, and in adult use for information is less in the inner-city than indicated in the circulation figure.

Nonetheless, the difference in productivity between large and small branches must be noted. In circulation handled per staff member, the annual figure is 18,348 in the five busiest branches, but only 3,415 in the five smallest units. Even granting possible heavier in-library study in the low-use agencies, the difference is still indicative. Unless service programs can be devised that meet the needs of residents in the low-use areas, their continuation at a low level of productivity will be hard to

justify. We are beyond the stage in municipal finance of maintaining facilities which people "ought" to have but which they in fact do not use. This report proposes a change in branch programs that will arouse more response in low-use districts.

Two contrasting patterns of branch provisions prevail in the older and the newer sections of Philadelphia. In the further-out northeast and northwest sections, branches are spaced two miles apart on the average, and have larger collections and staffs, but are spaced on the average one mile apart in the older, inner sections, and have smaller collections and staffs. Despite the greater proximity of outlets, use per capita is less in South Philadelphia than farther out in the newer sections, and this is true whether use is measured by home circulation or by requests for help within the agencies. Direct expenditures for branch service are less per capita in the older than in the outlying newer sections. If the aim is to get the largest measurable return in use for dollars spent, the present practice of putting more per capita into middle-class areas is appropriate. But if a priority goal of the City and of the library is to improve the lives of those who are "information poor" and to help preserve older neighborhoods, then a different distribution of funds would be indicated. To date expenditure has followed use, which is a marketing policy rather than a social, educational or governmental policy.

The impression the visitor gets in going from branch to branch in the inner city is that these are remnants of libraries

set up for people who have since moved away. The unarticulated assumption is of a facility for children who like to read, for students who are well motivated to do their homework, for adults who are interested in current and popular books, and for individuals who systematically pursue subject interests. These characteristics do not predominate among the people who now live in the older and less affluent sections. As residents have changed, local library service has remained essentially the same, except to contract within the previous model.

Should Philadelphia continue to maintain all its 49 branches, in the face of financial limitations that are weakening service all along the line? Logical reasons can be given for closing up to eight units, mostly in the older, inner-city sections of the city. This number could be closed and still provide all residents as nearby access to a branch as prevails in other sections of Philadelphia -- in fact, such closings would tend to equalize access in the several sections. With fewer units, each could be better stocked and better staffed. The tangible return for money spent would be greater, because the unit cost per transaction is greater in smaller units: the cost per item circulated in North Philadelphia is $3.70 (i.e., direct expenditures divided by circulation) and $1.82 in Northeast Philadelphia, and a similar contrast applies if number of inquiries of staff is used as the measure.

But such logic does not convince local residents living near branch libraries which they have become accustomed to and consider

their own. If their outlet were closed, they and their children would have to travel a greater distance, sometimes across social as well as physical boundaries. Further, a neighborhood asset and focal point would be lost, often in communities already showing signs of instability. Logic confronts loyalty, and in recent encounters loyalty has prevailed. And at least one logical question can be raised by local residents when central and unilateral decisions are made to close facilities: "Why us, why our neighborhood to have nothing, while all the others retain everything they have?"

The long-range plan presented later in this report does not propose branch closings. It recommends modification and concentration of all branch programs which will make a local outlet justifiable in all neighborhoods where they exist. The report does point to several instances where closing of one unit and strengthening of another in the same area would make for better service for all, but proposes that any such adjustments be made only after taking the issue to the communities involved, making the case not in confrontation but in joint planning sessions, and acting only when the neighborhoods consent because they believe the change would be to their advantage.

Branches bring service closer to people, where they live. They establish a continuing professional-client relationship with some users that is usually lacking in central units. At their best, they become part of the community fabric, an institution of local life that helps build loyalty to neighborhoods.

But their purposes are vague ("to give the people what they want" is the most frequent response of branch librarians). Their resources are limited, so that the constant report is of inability to supply what visitors ask for. Use has declined steadily in the last fifteen years, starting before the slowdown in financial increases, and applying to comfortable as well as impoverished communities (taking the 30 branches that existed in 1965, circulation of books in these units is just about one-half today; the reason that total branch circulation is not down this much is that new units were opened in the interval, most of which proceeded to turn down in use after an initial period of substantial patronage).

But numbers are not the sole criterion. If even a moderate number of people gain understanding that enriches their lives, and in turn the life of their city, the cost and effort can be justified.

However, one comes away from the branches (all were visited in the study) with uncertainty about their purposes and their effectiveness. A child goes home with a delightful book -- but the children who most need the opportunity, the reluctant readers, do not come to the library. A high-school student seeks material for homework -- in a collection not built for the purpose. An adult gets a best-seller -- but the next person seeking the same title goes without, for the branch cannot provide many duplicate copies to meet heavy temporary demand. Another adult finds a book on a subject of concern -- but others don't, for the range of human interest is wide and the capacity of

relatively small nonfiction collections is limited. An inquirer gets the answer to a specific question -- at the cost of considerable time of a staff working with circumscribed resources, when the question could have been answered more readily and fully if telephoned in to an information center. A small group gets the benefit of an instructive film or talk -- on a subject that can be followed in similar gatherings in other agencies in the community.

Each branch tries to be at once a children's library, a popular-reading source, a student's collection, a subject library for adult interests, a reference center, and a group meeting place -- all with basically limited staffs and collections, both of which have been further weakened as a result of recent financial restrictions. The branches are trying to do too much with too little.

The observer's disappointment is greatest in low-income neighborhoods. Here is where needs are pressing, for children to read on their own, for young people to use resources to prepare for employment and family responsibilities, for adults to utilize information which they have not gained through extensive formal education. The children are reached to some extent, but by no means the majority of youngsters. Teenagers come in to a limited extent to do homework. Only a small group of adults turn to this free resource provided for them. The connection is not made, the potential not realized. Various of the inner-city branches are now hollow relections of once vital neighborhood institutions, and this in neighborhoods in dire need of reading facility on the part of children and of practical information in the hands of adults.

The branches have been reported on at a little length, and critically, because their future is uncertain under present policies. If the large-city public library is declining, it is in the extension units that it shows the first visible signs. Not having clear objectives nor the resources to meet demands made on them, branches are natural targets for reductions in hours, staff, and book funds. In that there are so many of them, more can be saved by cutbacks at this level, and by the same token it is difficult to find the counter-means to mount more effective local programs. Yet branches are the outposts that bring the remote library close to people, so they are potential assets if clear and achievable service programs are devised, and they are lifelines to latent community support for the library, which in the end may determine whether the institution advances or declines.

This report in a later section recommends a sharpening of objectives for branches, a significant modification in the range of their service programs, and a "targeting" of resources to match differences in communities.

USE OF THE FREE LIBRARY

The Free Library, like most public libraries, lacks full statistics on use. There is no record or figure showing the percentage of the population that uses the agency in the course of a year or any other time period. Attendance figures are not kept on numbers of persons entering the various branches. Use trends

must therefore be pieced together from the information available: circulation figures (items borrowed for use outside the premises), registration records (persons taking out a library card in the last three years), and the count of "professional service" requests for help at the service desks in locating information and materials.

A great expansion in use of The Free Library occurred after World War II. From 1950 to 1965 the number of registered borrowers increased from 221,352 to 533,394. Circulation jumped from 3,894,029 to 6,313,822 in 1965.

Then a fifteen-year decline set in. From the high point in 1965, circulation fell steadily for 10 years, rallied somewhat in the mid 70's and then dropped to a low point of 4,274,927 in fiscal year 1978-1979. The loss was all in children's use, with adult circulation holding about even over the period while juvenile circulation fell 53 percent.

The average annual circulation of the branches existing in 1965 was 106,376, while the figure for the same units in 1980 was 53,855, just about half what it was. The areas of the City involved in this drop in use ran the gamut from relatively poor to relatively substantial communities. The only reason that circulation in the Extension Division did not fall more rapidly in the fifteen-year period is that new branches were opened in the interval. Once established, they in turn exhibited a decline through the 1970's.

Although many factors contributed to the decline in The Free Library's circulation, the most significant is the steady migration of population from the City, particularly families with school-age

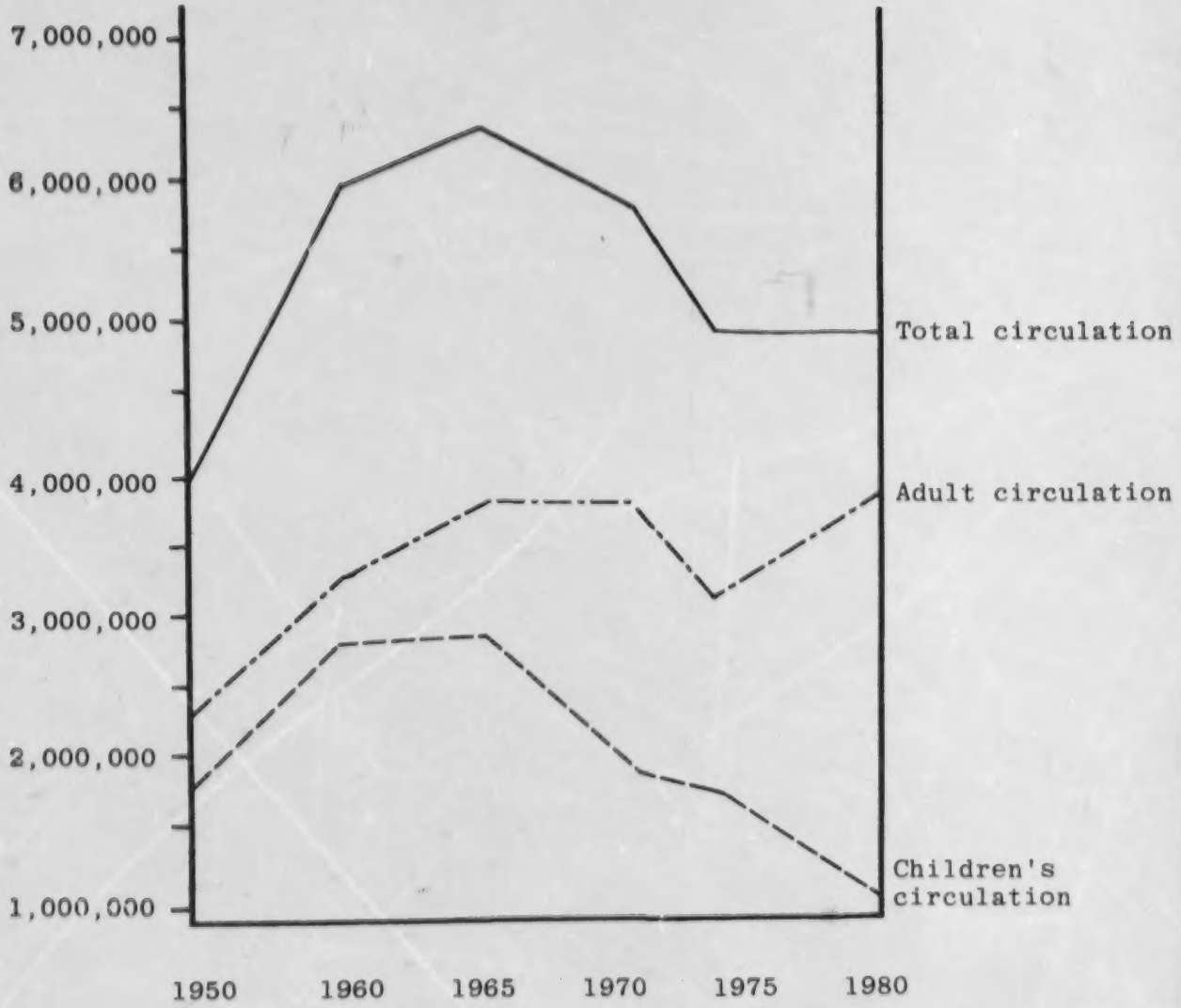
children. There are simply fewer adults and fewer children to take out books today than there were 15 years ago. If population predictions are correct, this trend will continue for the next 10 years at least, both in out-migration and in low birth rates. Additional factors in declining juvenile use are the development of school libraries and the preeminent role of television as a source of diversion for children.

TABLE 7

CIRCULATION TRENDS 1950-1980

	Adults	Percentage Change	Children	Percentage Change	Total	Percentage Change
1950	2,265,822	--	1,628,207	--	3,894,029	-
1960	3,251,697	+43.5	2,646,726	+62.5	5,898,423	+51.5
1965	3,607,037	+10.9	2,706,785	+ 2.3	6,313,822	+ 7.0
1970	3,582,407	- .7	1,999,606	+26.1	5,582,013	-11.6
1975	3,300,304	- 7.9	1,619,222	-19.0	4,919,526	-11.9
1980	3,621,906	+ 9.7	1,281,395	-20.9	4,903,301	- .3

Figure 2
Circulation of Materials, 1950-1980



Loss of population, however, can not be given as the sole reason for circulation drop. The per capita circulation was 3.2 in 1965 (the high point), but is only 2.5 today.

Registration and professional services statistics, on the other hand, reveal a somewhat different picture. Registration reached a peak in 1970 with 596,568 registered borrowers, and then remained fairly even over the next 10 years. In 1980, there were 583,180 registrations in force. While the absolute number of registered borrowers has declined slightly, the percentage of the population registered has increased moderately. In 1970, 30.6 percent of the population was registered, and in 1980, 34.2 percent (using the preliminary census figure of 1,680,000 for 1980).

Professional service requests were highest in 1977 at 803,449, falling slightly to 792,334 in 1978 and 771,517 in 1979.[1] However, even using 1979, the year in which The Free Library faced reduction of resources on many fronts, professional services increased 10.9 percent in the last ten years, while the population was decreasing. This means that fewer people were asking more questions, which may reflect more service being given, or alternatively may indicate greater difficulty on the part of the public in using the Library as collections were depleted.

Another use figure worthy of note is attendance at programs and book talks in which The Free Library is involved. In 1979-1980

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1 The Free Library changed its method of recording personal inquiries in January, 1980. Inquiries requiring professional service and simple directional questions are now lumped together, so any 1980 count is not comparable with previous years. The basis of recording remained the same during the periods mentioned here, so the figures are comparable.

there were 4,344 such events, at the adult and young adult levels, with an attendance of 103,269, up from the previous year. At the children's level, the number of programs inside the Library increased to 6,264 in 1979-1980, again with increased attendance. The Free Library is an active agency, in the sense of relating reading and library use to activities for the individual.

In summary, circulation is down, registration is up moderately, and professional service requests are up significantly. Circulation reports for the first half of the 1980-1981 year show an upturn for some agencies (in particular for the Central Library), but overall the branches show the chronic five percent annual decline, so there is little evidence for concluding that the long downturn has touched bottom.

In some respects the most telling statistic would be the percentage of Philadelphians using their library in any given period, say in the course of a year. The Free Library lacks this key indicator. To get an exact figure it would be necessary to conduct an expensive poll among the general public, which was beyond the means of the present study. However, an approximate figure can be built up, starting with the registration count and making various adjustments based on the results of more extensive studies in Baltimore and Chicago.[1] Two deductions must first be made from the registration total. Where the registration file covers a three-year period (as in Philadelphia), a 20 percent

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1 See Adults and The Pratt Library, No. 4 in the Deiches Fund Studies, 1974, p. 43-45, and Library response to urban Change, a study of the Chicago Public Library, 1969, p. 24-26.

deduction must be made for "dead wood" -- that is, individuals who are deceased, those who no longer live in the city, and those who probably have not used the library since getting their card two or three years ago. Another deduction of 7-8 percent is made for registrants who live outside of Philadelphia. Then several additions must be made: for persons not registered but who use materials on the premises (16-17 percent -- one in six), for persons who do not come to the Library but read books brought home by others (9-10 percent), and for persons who telephone in for information but are neither card holders nor visitors (5-6 percent).

TABLE 8

REGISTERED BORROWERS, 1950-1980

	Adults	Percentage Change	Children	Percentage Change	Total	Percentage Change
1950	133,752	--	87,600	--	221,352	--
1960	257,207	+92.3	172,704	+97.2	429,911	+94.2
1965	330,727	+28.6	202,667	+17.3	533,394	+24.0
1970	382,630	+15.7	213,938	+ 5.6	596,568	+11.8
1975	363,184	- 5.0	178,799	-16.4	541,983	- 9.1
1980	414,227	+14.0	168,943	- 5.5	583,180	+ 7.6

The result of these manipulations is an estimate of approximately 600,000 Philadelphians who have had contact with The Free Library in the past year, 35.7 percent of the total preliminary census figure for 1980. This is a higher percentage than was found in Baltimore and Chicago, and the Philadelphia figure does not include such additional "exposures" or "contacts" as may occur when individuals who do not use the Library for any other purpose come to film showings or other group events within the Library and to showings of Library films in other centers, nor does it include children and adults contacted by Library staff when they go out to school classrooms and to community organizations. In round numbers, up to one-half of Philadelphia residents have some contact with The Free Library in the course of a year, and up to one-third have a regular association with the institution.

City authorities would do well to note this considerable impact of one of its service agencies. Other than the schools, where attendance is mandated, and of safety and physical maintenance activities, The Free Library reaches more of the residents of Philadelphia than most other educational-cultural agencies. Small wonder that communities rise up in arms when threats are made to close branch libraries. If the measure is the quality of life for residents and workers, the case can be made that library service is an essential of city life and not just an ornament or marginal benefit.

Even though up to one-half of Philadelphians have some contact with The Free Library, this obviously means that the other half -- some 800,000-850,000 individuals -- do not. Who are the nonusers,

and why don't they use the Library? Any difinitive answer would require an extensive and expensive series of field interviews in some depth, costing more than the total budget for the present survey.

To get some response, staff members were asked on a voluntary basis to talk with nonusers within their acquaintance and in organizations with which they are associated. Sixty-one staff members volunteered and recorded results from interviews with 531 individuals. The sample covered the various age and economic levels and the several sections of the City, but was low on persons over 65 years of age and on residents of North Philadelphia.

Nonusers divide into three groups:

Those who do little if any book reading and have not visited the library in many years.

Those who are book readers but obtain their materials by purchase or borrowing from friends, and have no occasion to use the public library.

Those who used The Free Library in the past but have discontinued doing so for various reasons.

The sample was not large enough or scientific enough to permit reliable estimates of the proportion of each group within the nonuser population.

Some 30 percent of respondents confessed to little if any book reading: "don't like to read" -- "don't have time to read". This is somewhat less than usually shown in more formal studies. Because a certain prestige attaches to reading, some additional

individuals may actually not be book readers, but used some other "excuse" to explain their lack of library use. At any rate, several hundred thousand Philadelphians seldom if ever open a book, and are unlikely prospects for any kind of typical provision by the Library. On the other hand, some of these may be prospects for utilitarian information if this does not involve prolonged reading.

The next largest group of nonusers is made up of individuals who get their reading elsewhere. Twenty-four percent report buying their own books. They have in a sense made a calculation of the inconvenience to them in getting to a library outlet and in conforming to prescribed loan periods and have decided in favor of a cash outlay. They are in most cases quite satisfied with this arrangement, and are also unlikely prospects as library users.

Among the "dropouts" from the Library, the most frequent reason given for no longer using the agency has to do with hours: "the library is not open when I want to go." This reaction is most pointed on the part of women who were formerly housewives with flexibility of time during the day, but are now working and have only late evening hours (after returning home to prepare dinner) and Saturday hours to visit the Library -- and this group is increasing in size in Philadelphia as elsewhere. There is a feeling among working people that reductions of hours of service are decided for the convenience of people at home and for the convenience of the library staff. Various other reasons for dropping out are given, from lack of the titles sought, to fear

of ending up with a long overdue book and large fines, to the occasional vivid complaint that staff members are inhospitable, intimidating and even rude.

Restoration of hours and of book funds would bring back some former users. But those who have found alternative sources and those who do little if any reading outside of newspapers are not going to be lured by any upbuilding of traditional library services, and indeed there in no compelling reason why a public service must be used by 100 percent of the people.

However, it is notable that the greatest rate of nonuse of library service as it stands is in the low-income, low-education areas, which characterize definite parts of Philadelphia. If The Free Library is to play any significant part in the personal and social rehabilitation of older and deteriorating parts of its City, it is clear that fundamental changes will have to be made in the purpose and substance of library service in such areas. Simply re-establishing the service program that existed before budget restrictions will not do the job.

A different aspect of use has to do with the temporary loan of materials from one library to another, both intralibrary (within The Free Library system) and interlibrary (from outside agencies).

Complete records are not kept of exchanges within the system. Less than 2,000 requests from branches move through the Inter-library Loan Office annually, and perhaps an equal number are

handled personally by branch librarians when they visit Central. Assuming any degree of reliability in these estimates, the average branch processes some ten requests per month. The central collection theoretically stands behind the outposts, but is not actually called on to any large extent to meet users' needs.

The Free Library loans some 7,000 volumes per year to other libraries, and obtains only 621 from the outside for its own readers. Outgoing materials are lent to Delaware County libraries, to district libraries throughout Pennsylvania and to a lesser extent to other libraries in Pennsylvania and in other states. Other than its distribution under the state-wide plan, The Free Library is not a major provider of interlibrary loans to other agencies. Similarly, it is also a limited borrower from other libraries, despite the restrictions in its book funds and the depletions that have occurred in its collections.

From the standpoint of The Free Library user, the channels of both intralibrary and interlibrary loan are either not known or for various reasons are clogged, so that this source of sharing among libraries does not help Philadelphia readers to any appreciable extent. The initial blockage in the system is failure of the Library to publicize and promote this service, and the failure of staff at the service desks to call attention to it as a possibility when material sought cannot be found in branch or in central resources.

STAFF

The number of regular staff positions in The Free Library decreased from 856 in 1970 to 666 in 1980, a drop of over 22 percent. The number today is only slightly higher than 25 years ago, 631 in 1955, despite the fact that 26 branches and three regional libraries have been built and opened since that time. Philadelphia provides one staff member for each 2,446 persons in the population, whereas the average for the 28 large public libraries used as a baseline in the Bowker Annual[1] statistics is one staff member for each 1,539 persons. In recent years temporary CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Trainee Act) workers have helped to fill the personnel gap, but they never brought the number up to full standard, turnover is high in this group, and a training period is needed for each new assignee.

The Free Library staff divides just about equally into three groups. One-third are professionally-trained librarians occupying service and administrative positions. An approximately equal number fall in the library assistant and technician categories, without professional education but with responsibility after in-service training for library operations and records. The remaining third classify in a miscellany of special, maintenance and security categories. By carefully separating professional and clerical duties, some large city libraries have found it possible to get

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1 Bowker Annual of Library and Book Trade Information, 1980, p. 382-83

along with 25 percent or less of the staff in the professional class, as compared with Philadelphia's 33 percent.

The Free Library finds it necessary to employ 12 individuals classified as guards in the Central Library, and the custodians in the branches also function part of their time as guards. Substantially more than a half-million dollars a year goes to security.

The Free Library makes no or little use of personnel in the following categories: part-time workers to reshelve books which are used, clericals with high rating in typing and related skills, library technicians (with college degrees but lacking graduate professional training) to carry out tasks involving subject background but not advanced professional education, and part-time professionals for busy periods. Volunteers are effectively utilized in a few branches and in service to the homebound, but these are the exceptions to the rule. The staffing pattern is narrow and rigid and does not provide flexibility in meeting peak-load requirements. One result is that professionals engage in a variety of nonprofessional tasks, particularly in the branches, where graduate librarians keep records, fill in at circulation desks, and shelve books.

Because performance measures are lacking in the library field, the quality and productivity of staff cannot be objectively reported. Contacts with personnel at various levels in the course of this study give an impression of personable, intelligent and service-minded individuals. Judging from comments of previous

users of the Library, the personable qualities do not always hold at the point of user contact. Almost uniformly a sense of concern is displayed for financial restrictions on the Library.

Beyond that, attitudes and motivation differ widely. In a lengthy staff questionnaire (returned by 89 percent of the total group), about one-half consider the collections and services of the Library to be "adequate" or "distinctive," while the other half have a contrary view. A similar division exists in staff evaluation of supervision and general administration within the agency.

Morale is uncertain or low on the part of a sizable proportion of the staff. At least part of this is to be expected in the face of financial cuts, personnel layoffs, and job insecurity. This personal sense is reinforced for some by their feeling that the Library is not performing effectively, that they are part of a drifting organization. Concern in some cases turns to irritation and anger in the face of what is perceived to be lack of decisive action by administration on certain clear problems (the overdue problem is cited most frequently) and by lack of opportunity to participate in planning to help the Library meet its obligations with restricted funds.

The conception of library service held by many staff members can be characterized as fairly traditional and conservative. There is not much consideration of basic change, despite what the Library has been through. Staff is disposed to distribute available money and time evenly across the several aspects of the program --

education, information, and recreation -- with a little less emphasis on but still definite provision of research service. When asked their opinion on how to meet financial shortages, most recommended further cuts in hours and in funds for library materials. In other words, retain the total program as it developed in the past, and if necessary cut where possible except in staff. This of course is precisely the position that prompted the Trustees and Director to commission the present study, to see if some way could be found out of the dilemma.

Whatever plan is adopted in the period ahead, strong administrative leadership will be needed to mobilize the staff. There is a tendency to seek to return to the good old days. Individuals from various levels must be drawn into the planning process. Both the staff association and the unions have a contribution to make. A revised library service program calls for a revised library staff, not a change in the individuals involved but in what present personnel want the agency to do, and in what they seek to accomplish with their skills.

Staff at all levels is dedicated to the Library, the librarians have professional competence, library assistants have experience and skill, middle managers and general administrators have judgment and empathy. The requisite qualities are there. What is needed is a rallying point, a goal and marching orders, and latent staff capacity will be released.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES

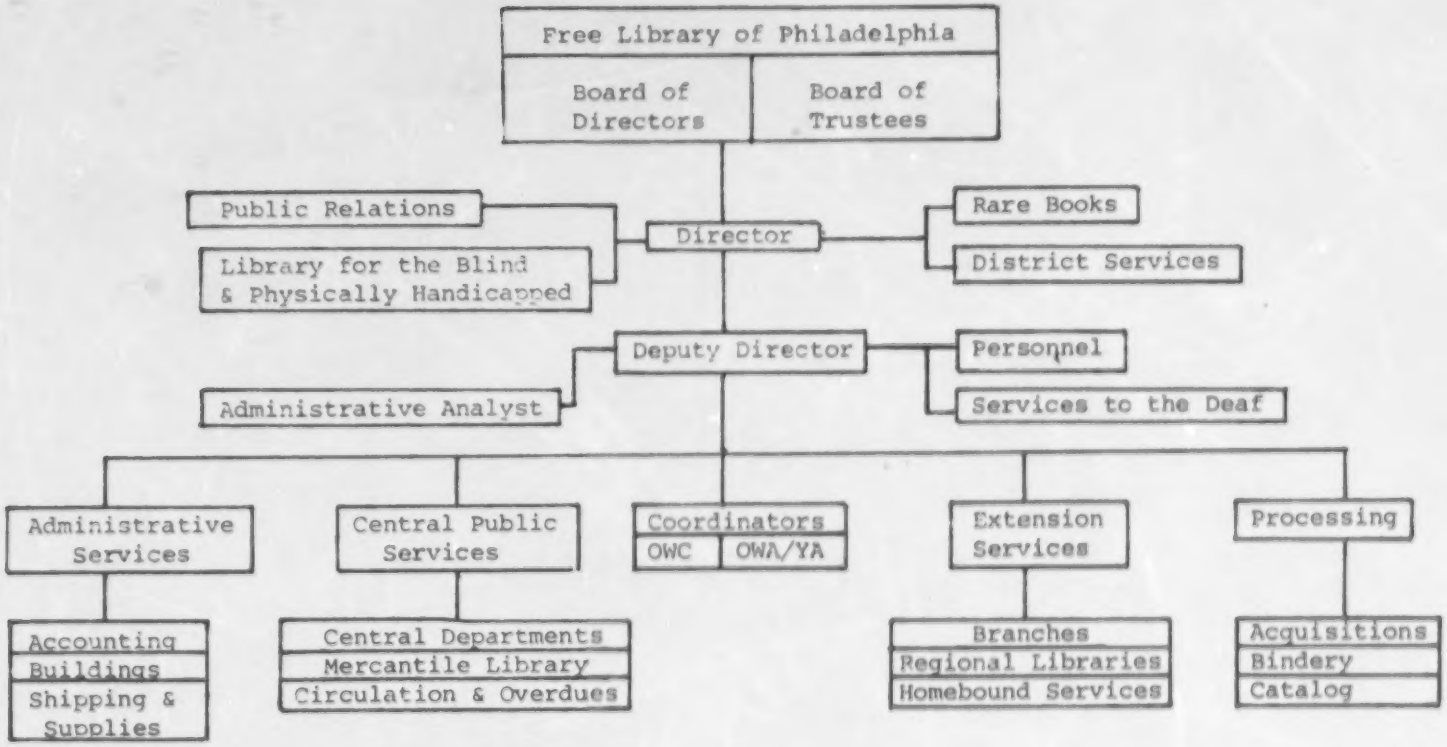
The formal organization of The Free Library is simple and straightforward. Span of control at the top level is reasonable (but not the span of responsibilities), and the number of levels within the organization is not excessive. Provision is made for both direct line control and for supporting staff services.

A Director and a Deputy Director handle general management and policy. Until 1979 there was a third position at this level, an Associate Director, but this has not been filled since the former Associate moved up to the position of Deputy after the death of the individual who had held that post. Thus two officers seek to handle a very wide range of responsibilities, from broad planning to day-to-day crises, from budget making to external relations with the government and the public. In a time of limited funds, immediate and short-term problems tend to pre-empt management time and attention while evaluation of performance and long-range planning are short-changed.

The two chief officers are backed up by several aides and support offices for finance, personnel and public relations. These are not line divisions with authority to initiate programs in their several fields, but take their lead from general officers and carry out policies and activities authorized at this level. They extend the capacity of general offices as staff services, but they do not relieve the Director and Deputy Director of any responsibility or authority.

Figure 3

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE FREE LIBRARY



The structure at the top level is centralized, with system-wide decisions made by a small group of officers. In the recent period of financial restrictions, hard choices had to be made centrally, and in the process some staff members have become alienated, feeling that their voices are not heard (said one librarian: "The most galling aspect of the situation is that no one listens"). They feel the stronger about being heard because they are the ones to take the brunt of reaction to reduced service capacity. There is some evidence that contact about basic issues has recently been somewhat opened between central administration and the rank and file. As one example, temporary task forces composed of staff members are being used more to look into system-wide problems.

The work of the Library is managed by four division chiefs (for the Central Library, Extension, Processing, and Administrative Services) and two Coordinators (for Children's Service and Adult-Young Adult Service). The Division Chiefs are line officers, with authority over the departments and branches reporting to them. Within Extension there are four area administrators for branches in the several main sections of the City, a plan inaugurated some years ago when new branches and regional libraries were in prospect and when branch staffs were larger than at present. This creates an additional level in the hierarchy, between branch administrators and the Chief of Extension; some branch librarians welcome the extra contact with a regional administrator, but others feel that this interposes an unnecessary step between local units and

headquarters and that decisions are not made until matters get to the division chief.

The two coordinating officers occupy a special position in the structure. They are not line officers with authority over departments and branches. Yet they play a key role in what goes on in the service units, in book selection, kind and quality of service, training of staff, and initiation of new activities. They can properly be credited with the educational dimension that has characterized the program of The Free Library in the past.

The two coordinating units come as close as the Library has to planning and development offices. They search out and design new ventures, and sometimes seek the funds for and carry out the plans made. Now with funds short, and fewer central initiatives taken, some line staff members question the sizable expenditures for the two coordinating units, and feel that central standards and regulations emanating from the coordinator's offices curtail local initiative.

It is more in non-formal, nonstructural aspects of administration that questions must be raised. At the top level, communication, coordination and joint review are facilitated by weekly meetings of the Chiefs and Coordinators with the Director and Deputy Director, in what in substance are cabinet meetings. But beyond this, communication from general administration to the staff as a whole depends on the vagaries of the administrative hierarchy and on a few formal channels. As to means and channels

for communication from the bottom up, as distinct from announcements and reports from the top down, these are few and far between. Regular and open staff meetings occur in some departments and branches but not in others. Communication within the Library is criticized by 54 percent of staff members.

This criticism is pushed a further step. Sixty-six percent of staff feel that reasonable opportunity is lacking to participate in planning. The feeling grows stronger as funds become short, because some members of the group believe they have ideas which may be of help, and many are concerned about the effect of decisions prompted by lack of money on their jobs and job security.

It is not as though The Free Library is characterized by frequent or continuous planning for the future. Most administrators are hard put to meet schedules and conduct regular operations, and have neither the time nor energy to sit back, gain perspective, look ahead, make plans, and try experiments. This is the dilemma of the agency under threat: just when planning should be intensified, to find a way out of the tight spot, time and energy are exhausted in simply keeping the store open.

Both highly centralized decision-making and lack of long-range planning are exemplified in the budget making process in The Free Library. Within the Library this key activity is carried through in a short period of time and at the last minute. No long-term plans guide the direction of budget adjustments. Requests are not solicited from the operating units. Pressing needs that have come

to the surface are considered by the general officers and in cabinet meetings. Very little cost data is available to the budget-makers, whether for unit costs of operations (circulation, cataloging, etc.) or for expenditures for service programs (for maintaining the regional libraries, for children's service, etc.). Of course, in a time when money is short, there is not much room for adjustment and change in the budget, but even at such times a sense of direction -- even a plan of retrenchment if necessary -- can prevent continuation of expenditures just because they have prevailed in the past. When income is down, for a person or an institution, that is a good time to examine the budget with special care.

There is one notable exception to this criticism of lack of planning and of financial projection, and this exception illustrates the value of the longer view and the fresh start. The exception is the project now launched for automating the acquisition - cataloging - circulation process in the Library. This venture will change significant parts of internal operations, will speed up various processes, may save money, and should produce service dividends. Certainly it will put the Library in a position to take advantage of new technology. All this took planning, investigation, cost calculations, and a view that extended over more than one year, which are lacking in regular budget-making. It is true that the money in this instance comes from capital funds rather than from current municipal revenues, but the flexibility permitted in use of such funds opens the prospect of planning for and financing other important developments.

Nor is the critical administrative step of evaluation common in The Free Library, whether for individual staff members, for departments and branches, or for service programs. Officers, of course, have impressions and judgments concerning the various parts of the organization, and supervisors prepare periodic reports on subordinates. But without a clearer sense of what is to be accomplished, and without standards or measures of performance, these opinions are subjective and as such are less convincing for taking corrective action.

Neither ongoing programs nor short-term projects are evaluated. To what extent are users unable to get the books they seek in the Library -- how current and accurate is the information dispensed across information desks -- are people confused by the Central Library organization -- how many people and what people use the research departments -- what proportion of resources stand unused on the shelves for a year or more -- how far do children go to use branch libraries, and are there Philadelphia neighborhoods where the children in substance lack access to public library facilities? These and many other questions raise matters of evaluation which would tell the Library how well it is doing now and what still needs to be done. Few enterprises have been effective, whether in the private or the public sector, without self-evaluation.

The Free Library, like other libraries, depends on measures of input to determine how well it is doing. Per capita financial support, size of collections, number of staff in relation to

population -- these are the standards by which it judges itself. One important measure of use or output is kept, circulation of books for use off the premises, but with the qualification that circulation tells only part of the story. Records were formerly kept on number of reference questions asked, questions requiring professional assistance, but as of the beginning of 1980, this was extended to include any inquiry, including directional questions as to where facilities are located, which is a less discriminating measure because the count can rise in proportion to poor organization of facilities and in proportion to failure to properly identify by signs what is on the shelves. Except in the Central Library, door counts are not kept, so that the agency cannot say how many people come into its facilities in the course of a day or any other time period. Outputs, what use is made of the Library and what it accomplishes, as distinct from what is put into the agency, are the real and telling measures of performance, and can be applied to a wide range of management decisions, including budget-making, but for the most part are lacking in The Free Library.

The management program outlined in the last part of this report calls for establishment of a Planning, Development and Evaluation Office to provide depth to the general administration of The Free Library. Essentially this office will be the strategic arm of the Director, reinforcing him in his primary responsibilities as chief officer: plotting the course for the Library, relating the agency to change in the City, providing budget input, and judging progress.

There is a city-wide Library Friends group in Philadelphia, similar groups in each of the three regional areas, and also in a few local communities. These are associations of citizens who believe in the Library and actively support it, and who rally others to the cause when library programs and budgets are under review. The city Friends have issued a substantial pamphlet that includes among the functions of the group: "..... to keep office-holders and others connected with the funding chain aware of the importance of libraries."[1] The Northwest regional association won a 1980 state-wide "Award of Merit" from the Pennsylvania Citizens for Better Libraries. The Free Library has an asset in these several divisions of troops in the field, and will want to keep them fully involved and informed so that they can march as needed.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Textbooks on administration stress the need for clear purposes and specific aims if an enterprise is to be effective. Public libraries in the past were able to develop as an exception to the rule. An aura of good works has surrounded the institution, as shown even today by generally favorable responses to the agency by people who seldom if ever use it and by government officials who reduce its budget requests. A faith in the value of the printed word is shared by staff and public alike. The reading child is seen as a good child and adults with a book are seen as serious and responsible individuals, no matter what they may be reading.

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1 The Friends of the Free Library of Philadelphia, Inc. Find out who your friends are p. 50.

The Free Library earlier thrived and now survives on this aura and faith. It has surprisingly few statements of purpose, and even fewer specific objectives set down to be achieved in stated periods. Goals are assumed without being articulated. As one branch librarian put it: "I don't know what the objectives of The Free Library are."

The charter of the Library refers to it as an "educational institution." Education of course is a socially-approved purpose, but without definition it is vague and inclusive. In a loose sense almost any experience can be "educational," whether meeting a friend or watching a TV commercial, walking down any street as well as reading any book.

To be distinquished from any daily activity, education must have two characteristics:

1. conscious goals or aims to be achieved,
2. means and methods specifically adopted or developed to achieve these goals.

The starting point is people and how they seek to change or develop, not books and films and recordings as these issue from publishers and producers. "Goals" and "methods" do not mean systematic instruction and formal classes; purposes can be clear and methods appropriate in an informal and individual structure.

It proves difficult to draw out Free Library staff, including department heads and branch librarians, on the perceived role and mission of their units, what they hope to accomplish with their service. Librarians at the service points customarily do not

think in terms of goals and objectives. They seldom discuss the needs of people or in what way they hope to improve their lives. The librarian is equally diligent in helping a businessperson to find marketing data and in helping the same person to find a book for falling asleep at bedtime.

Children's librarians are an exception, and the quality and impact of their service illustrates the value of objectives. They do not say they give the children what they "want." Their replies to questions of purpose take the form of: "to open the joy of reading to youngsters" -- "to develop their understanding of people and the world" -- "to stimulate their imaginations." Watching young children respond to a story hour or older children return at intervals to the librarian for guidance suggest that these are not idle claims. Small wonder that this is the aspect of library service that comes first to the mind of many people when they think of the public library, and the aspect that they fight hardest to retain. What remains of the past aura of the public library is being sustained by the juvenile program. At the same time, this position can be pushed too far in the other direction, with the children's librarian's conception of proper reading limited to treasures that strike no response in today's street children. It is easy for juvenile librarians to project onto children the tastes of their own youth.

A question form to all department heads and branch librarians brought out relatively little under an inquiry about "aims and purposes." The objective usually cited is to meet the requests of

users, to give the people what they want. Actually there are some implied content objectives, as evidenced both in subject departments and branch libraries by the purchase and holding of some titles not in frequent demand. This is done because of a conception of the desirability of a well-balanced collection, which librarians acquire from their training and from the traditions of the institution, not from clearly formulated aims as to what is to be accomplished with such a collection.

But basically the objectives come back to meeting demand. For example, a branch librarian, asked what he would buy if he had more money, replied that he would first purchase books about astrology and recordings of rock music. These choices were not made because he considered these topics most important for any conscious goals he had in mind, but because they are in heavy demand and these two kinds of materials tend to be stolen or kept out on overdues, so they are to be replaced.

This example may seem exceptional, but the principle involved has wide application. Another librarian, asked the same question, said: "Children are coming in with school assignments about insects, so I would get more material on this topic." In neither instance was a defined and appropriate function of the public library taken into account. The implication in one case is that the agency is a kind of popular record shop and in the other that it in substance is a school library supplying material for assignments, purposes which would be unlikely to appear in any considered and formal statement of the role of The Free Library.

Lacking the guidance of institutional goals, individual staff members can only respond to requests made upon them.

Still another illustration is the practice of some branch librarians of accepting gifts of paperback books from local residents, sometimes by the armful, and putting them on the shelves for others to read. What books? Any that are given, because some people will like to read them. While paperback publications have a definite place in any acquisition program for the Library, these gift shelves have exactly what the corner newstand and the corner drugstore have, except that the Library's copies are dog-eared and shopworn.

This reliance on expressed demand alone as the guiding star for library collections and services has a further effect. Expressions of definite book interests come from individuals and communities that from family heritage and educational experience have come to depend on books. Often the supplying of these interests would accord with any likely formulation of library objectives, but not necessarily so. But reading interests are not expressed by individuals and communities that are not accustomed to using printed sources for information and background. With few local interests put forth, the librarians in these areas have little to go on except what is requested in other "reading" neighborhoods or requested by a very small minority within their own area. Having no conscious objectives that they are seeking to achieve, they have no functional basis for book selection. The result is the growing gulf between The Free Library and the low-

education communities of Philadelphia. It was this sequence that prompted a sharply critical comment a few years ago by a national leader among public librarians: "If the public library remains a middle-class institution, serving only the leisure interests of a small portion of the adult population, then it is probably already on the path to its ultimate extinction."[1]

Examination of the brief statement of the Library's book selection policy, and a discussion with members of the Central book selection staff, brought out a little greater sense of role or purpose. The aim reported for the Central Library is to build up a collection of some scope at about the undergraduate level. This implies both a clientele and an objective: to provide for college students and for adults not in school who aspire to knowledge at this level a resource to which they can turn for their individual education. For regionals, the characterization of collections was more at the community college level or below. Here again there was little reference to the particular kinds of users for whom resources were selected, or what it was hoped the user would experience or gain.

For both Central and regionals the orientation is essentially towards collections; these are to be provided and maintained, and appropriate readers will seek them out. The starting point is the book and not the user; purpose is assumed or implied but not clearly defined.

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1 Martin, Allie Beth. "The Public Library: Future Shock." Library Journal, vol. 96 (August, 1971), p. 2469.

In the branches the situation is reversed, user demand being the starting point, collection more incidental, and purpose again not consciously considered. For branches, the titles designated by the central selection unit are those that have high prospective popularity due to author, theme, or publisher promotion. Branch librarians then make the final choice, in the light of what the community "wants" or "reads," which in practice means the requests of that portion of the community that has found that the agency is sensitive to its taste for titles in the public eye. One almost gets the impression that if the "community" in some way were to make known its usually-hidden interest in sex and violence, a significant part of the branch collection would be devoted to this, as is much of the content of television. But library users express polite and proper interests and polite and proper publications are provided.

Emphasis has been given to goals and objectives -- or lack of them -- because so much of the future of The Free Library turns on them. Without aim and focus, the agency will continue to try to be all things to all people. This unfocussed program, without demonstrated results, is not going to command more money. Every basic question confronted by the Library -- should there be more or fewer branches, should children's service be strengthened or turned over to the schools, should emphasis be given to the Central Library or to decentralized outlets, should information service be increasingly computerized or should it remain primarily dependent on printed sources -- comes back to why the agency exists and what place it is to have in these next years in the rebuilding of Philadelphia. Faith is nearly exhausted; purpose must take its place.

Despite the weaknesses reported in the previous section, The Free Library continues to play a part in the life of Philadelphia. We have seen that up to one-half of the residents of the City have some contact with the Library in the course of a year, and up to one-third have a regular association.

The Library's public is composed of many different subgroups that turn to the agency for contrasting reasons. In its tradition as the public library, the agency attempts to respond to all, the businessperson who wants financial data and the reader who wants a diverting novel, the student doing homework and the specialist doing research, the aspiring author and the aspiring electrician, the preschool youngster and the post-retirement oldster, the adult deficient in reading ability and the adult into avant-garde poetry. The public of The Free Library is fragmented, each segment wanting resources on sharply different topics and levels, spreading across much of the body of recorded knowledge.

In seeking to serve the many subgroups, no evaluation is made of purposes or publics. The credo of The Free Library is that all are equal and all are welcome. The faith or hope is that somewhere in the collection -- even in the depleted collection -- there will be something for everyone. It is an open and egalitarian policy.

The catch is that The Free Library is losing the capacity to meet this inclusive range of demand. Its collection is weakened and its staff decreased and disheartened. The agency is living

off its past strength. It finds itself overextended, its reach beyond its grasp, with service slipping all along the line. At present the staff conceives the Library as a physical place with its doors open to all and not as a functional center. Concern is more with what is in the agency than in what it does.

Under these circumstances, substantial increases in financial support are not forthcoming. A hard-pressed municipal government is not sure just what Philadelphia would gain by an increase in library funds. The Free Library requests funds to restore services (hours, collections, staff), but it is not clear that a return to the institution of the 1960's is what is needed for the next ten to twenty years.

The Philadelphia envisioned for the next period, the city of sound economy and satisfying community life, needs this agency. But how is the Library to demonstrate this, when it cannot meet present demand? It is caught in a downward spiral.

The theme proposed in this report is "concentrate and strengthen." Hard decisions will have to be made on what to do first and what to do well. Then, with vitality restored, The Free Library can venture into new fields needed by the new Philadelphia, and do so from a position of demonstrated capacity. From this position, clear-cut additional services needed by Philadelphia can be proposed, government authorities will be able to judge them, and if approved there would be reasonable chance of getting adequate financial support because the amounts of money involved will not be large.

II. PROGRAM FOR THE FUTURE PAGE

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Specifically, it is proposed that The Free Library ask for two years of appropriations at the present level plus the rate of annual inflation, while it gets its house in order. This means shifting and concentrating resources and staff upon agreed priorities, as set forth shortly in this report. With vigorous leadership and staff cooperation, the impact and value of the concentrated program for business, individuals, and communities can be demonstrated. Then the Library will be ready to move into the next phase, essentially that of becoming the information utility for Philadelphia, which will require five years and supplementary funds. From this two-step process The Free Library of 1990 will emerge.

PRESENT INCLUSIVE FUNCTIONS

To develop the proposed program, it will be necessary first to list the present functions of the Library, so that the starting point for planning is known. Even a partial list of the functions and services will indicate the scope and range of the comprehensive program of The Free Library:

- introducing preschool youngsters to stories and pictures.
- stimulating elementary-age children to read and guiding them in their choice of reading.
- supplying reading materials sought by children outside of their school work.
- providing reference materials and subject publications to help elementary students with their homework.
- helping children to locate homework material and aiding them in understanding and using the material.

- guiding early teenagers in reading that helps them to understand themselves, other people, and the world.

- providing reference materials and subject publications needed by high school students to investigate school topics and to prepare school papers.

- extending the reference and subject provision to college students who turn to the public library.

- encouraging parents (particularly when they bring children to the library) to utilize printed resources relating to child raising and family life.

- providing job information, career guidance, materials for persons seeking or changing employment.

- advising and providing materials for adults of limited reading ability.

- mounting educational programs (films, speakers, seminars) on applied matters of interest to adults (such as investments, conservation and energy, public questions).

- organizing and conducting art-music-cultural events at the Central Library, regionals and branches.

- providing current best-sellers for readers who follow reviews and favor recent publications.

- supplying ephemeral leisure-time reading, such as romances, mysteries and science fiction.

- providing cultural, historical, art-music, philosophical works for adult readers in these fields.

- providing scientific and technological publications up to the level of advanced specialization and research.

- providing books, pamphlets and maps dealing with social, political, economic and geographical topics.

- furnishing utilitarian, how-to publications on hobbies and home repair, on cooking and gardening, on travel and sports, and on the host of other activities in which people engage.

- supplying material for senior citizens on retirement, health, money management, and later-year activities.

- providing books and pamphlets for community leaders, neighborhood projects, and professionals working in localities.

- advising users in the location and choice of these various types of materials--best sellers, diversional reading, cultural-social-scientific publications, utilitarian works, etc.

- providing magazines and serial publications on general, special-interest, technological and scholarly topics (each branch and regional library receives a selected list of magazines and the Central Library receives 3,654 different serial publications).

- maintaining files of pamphlets and government publications to back up and supplement the book collection.

- providing and maintaining prints, photographs and pictures on a wide range of subjects (the Free Library holds more than 1,000,000 such items).

- providing disc and tape sound recordings from popular to classical music, from children's stories to comtemporary poetry, from plays to political speeches.

- furnishing films for showing by organizations, community groups, and educational agencies.

- maintaining catalogs to enable users and staff to locate material sought.

- circulating most of the above holdings for use in homes, offices and organizations.

- maintaining files of 131 newspapers, both in print and microform.

- securing from other libraries material requested but not held by The Free Library.

- furnishing factual data by means of reference service in all units.

- furnishing factual data by means of the telephone to inquirers not visiting a library unit.

- maintaining a special business information facility for financial, communications, retail, service and other commercial enterprises in Philadelphia.

- maintaining community information files showing organizations and projects and including officers, purposes, activities, programs and schedules.

- referring inquirers to specialized agencies, government offices, and individuals able to handle particular questions

- providing computerized searching service from several automated data banks.

- building and preserving several research-level collections of manuscripts and books, notably in rare books, musical scores, the theater arts, history of the automobile, and choral music.

This considerable list of thirty-eight functions does not encompass all activities of the Library. Lesser but still sizable blocks of time are given to preparing reading lists, maintaining special files (for example, of adult-education opportunities in Philadelphia), visiting schools, contacting organizations to make them aware of library resources and services, and providing meeting space in library buildings for community and educational programs. Nor does the list include various behind-the-scenes and sometimes quite complex support activities such as acquisition, cataloging, preserving of materials, and preparing of displays.

NEED FOR PRIORITIES

It is self-evident that The Free Library does not have and will not get the means to perform all these functions at a sound and thorough level. What is most important -- how can choices be made?

Input has been received on where The Free Library should place its emphasis from several sources: from members of the general public in a series of four community meetings, from representatives of the business community, from Library staff members in sessions of a Planning Council extending over some 20 hours, from the officers of Friends of the Library groups, and from three outside consultants called in for the purpose (an urban librarian, a national library association official, and a management consultant).

In one way or another all subscribed to the principle of "concentrate and strengthen." To some degree all recognized the need to define purposes and to target services in order to get moving again.

But there was no single consensus on where to concentrate. Some favored development of the Central Library while others favored the branches. Some would emphasize subject and study materials while others would stress recreational reading. There were advocates of children's service and advocates of adult education. In some instances the choices reflected the personal interests of the individual -- the service each used or provided -- and in other cases differences in values were at work. The most intense feelings were aroused by the question of what to give up or de-emphasize in order to achieve adequacy in selected areas.

There also were differences of opinion on how far to fit into the hard reality of limited public funds on the one hand and on how far to strike out for additional funds on the other. Some want a pattern to fit the cloth available, while others want a "battle plan" for gaining higher ground of support. By and large it was users who favored a campaign to get more money, feeling that this was due them as Philadelphia residents and taxpayers, while both nonusers who look on the fray from a little distance and library officials who are battle-scarred sought a plan for moving forward without substantial additional financing.

So the bottom-line questions of priorities and support came back in time to the consultant. He could not simply record the

views of the community or of advisers but had to reach his own conclusions. The recommendations in this report are not the result of either a public-opinion poll or of a staff poll. For better or worse, they reflect the judgment of one person, influenced by the challenging city of Philadelphia, by the various and sometimes conflicting views of its people, and by the characteristics and potential of The Free Library and its staff.

Nor were the conclusions influenced by officials of the Library; this is not simply an agenda that they had in mind and wanted to have recorded and approved by an outside observer. The President of the Board of Trustees followed the course of the study and represented the Library in public meetings connected with it. The Director and the Deputy Director were supportive at all points, and while their decisions of the last few years reflect their conception of the balance of service needed at this time, they in no way sought to influence the outcome of this report.

The objectives and services proposed for The Free Library for the next decade are built up here step-by-step: first the criteria for determining priorites, then the functions to be stressed, and finally the services to be discontinued or reduced. The various pieces constitute a package; individual recommendations should not be taken out of context and compared with the Library as it stands at present. The proposals are not extreme nor radical, but they constitute a new design that must be comprehended before the parts can be judged.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING PRIORITIES

Several criteria were kept in mind in deciding upon priorities. Readers of the report will want to study these for a moment, because they determine what follows. Individuals who disagree with the recommendations will want first to decide what their own criteria are as the basis of priorities for The Free Library.

Here are the considerations that were kept in mind in deciding what conclusions to reach and what plan to propose. The service program of The Free Library for the next ten years:

- must relate to and support the revitalization effort in Philadelphia

  All agencies of the City must support this crucial effort, and do so even if some traditional and cherished activities must be sacrificed. If Philadelphia does not survive as a productive economic entity and as a satisfying place in which to live and raise families, then the future of The Free Library is dim indeed. The connection must be clear between each activity of the Library and the rebuilding of the City.

- must draw on and apply demonstrated capacities of the Library

  Even with constricted funds The Free Library has shown that there are some things it can do and do well. These should be the basis of a future program. This does not mean that fresh methods or new extensions cannot be introduced in services the agency has shown it can handle, nor does it mean that the old mixture and balance of activities must be retained, but this is not the time for the Library to venture into distinctly new fields where it has neither background, experience nor demonstrated capacity.

- must have clear goals and objectives that can be explicitly stated

  The present all-purpose program, as we have seen in the preceding section, leads to uncertainty in planning, lack of standards of performance, and a general casting about in all directions. The Free Library, like other public libraries, has been trapped by the fact that book and

related materials contain the whole gamut of human experience and expression, and that any book can be found to have some conceivable value. The Library will have to decide on value for what. Once purposes are clarified, concrete objectives can be established, to be achieved in a specified period of time.

- have purposes expressed in terms of people and what they will gain as a result of the service provided

  Existing Library aims, so far as they are articulated at all, tend to be expressed in terms of the agency and its resources and not in terms of people: "a balanced collection," "a thorough and accurate catalog," "up-to-date reference books," "shelves in order so you can find things." The implications for users are there, but not for which users and not for what aims or changes users seek to achieve. Services targeted at identified groups and for expressed purposes will be more effective than an inclusive program that does not get very far with any portion of the population.

- must stress the services that The Free Library can uniquely provide as distinct from resources and activities readily available from other organizations and from commercial sources

  Service agencies tend to spread out as they seek new activities and additional clientele, and in the process overlap and duplicate one another. They also tend to hold on to a function which they once uniquely provided, but which since has become available from other sources. In the present time of strain on American society, each agency should contribute at a high level in its special sector, rather than dissipating energy in competition with others, and in the end the total community will be better served. Both resource sharing and functional sharing must be practiced, in relation to the private commercial sector as well as to other libraries.

- must be susceptible to being brought close into the lives of people, conveniently within their reach, related to their regular round of living

  One reason that the public library has not been used more regularly by more people is that it is not convenient for them to do so. "Convenience" here is more than a matter of physical distance. There is a psychological gap between many potential users and the agency. In the larger sense convenience refers to fitting into the lives of individuals. To get a library book, individuals must first make a trip to the Library, abide by its rules for use and circulation, and then make a second trip to return the borrowed item. This compares unfavorably with the

convenience of using the school library while in school, depending on what is in the office or factory, stopping at the book rack while returning from work or while shopping, or with turning the television knob. The next period will be marked by the dissemination of information by electronic means, and in time by such distribution of print, and the public library will have to match and/or utilize this convenient mode.

- must be provided at a sound and adequate level, sufficient to achieve the objectives which are set

  The Free Library already provides most of the services proposed here, but often at a partial level and with distinct shortcomings in quality. Whatever the Library aspires to do in this next period, whatever it proclaims as its purposes, it must be able to make good on its word and actually deliver. Whatever services and programs it provides must be available not just to a fraction of potential users but to all who would benefit from them. Philadelphia needs a library that sets specific goals and has the capacity to achieve them, not a library with comprehensive goals that it cannot achieve.

There is another criteria of a different nature. Whatever the goals and the clienteles, the service provided must have a positive cost/benefit ratio. No neat price can be placed on the value of reading interest to a child or of data utilization in a business enterprise, but once an objective is adopted, it must be provided at a cost-per-service-unit that by common judgment seems reasonable. One consideration in selecting priorities is susceptibility of the necessary service to economy of provision. Public agencies must be efficient as well as effective.

FOCAL POINTS IN THE FUTURE PROGRAM

As against the thirty-eight or more present functions of The Free Library, it is proposed that the program for the 1980's

be built around five focal points. Some of the many functions previously listed will be subsumed under these few headings, but designing the service plan aroung these concentrations will make clear where the priorities are, will avoid dispersion and weakening of resources, and will be achievable with the money that can reasonably be expected.

1. The Free Library as the Knowledge Workshop, for out-of-school adults, the Resource Center for Seekers of Knowledge, to be provided in the Central Library and in five regional units (but not in branch libraries).

2. The Free Library as the Reading and Media Center for Young People, from preschool through the early teen years, to be carried out through the branch libraries.

3. The Free Library as a series of small adult materials centers in local communities, each made up of targeted resources and concentrated on and tailored to predominant interests of the locality.

4. The Free Library as the People's University in the form of educational projects aimed at specific purposes and targeted user groups, planned centrally but available city-wide and through local branches.

5. The Free Library as the City and Community Information Center, built upon a central data bank with terminals in regional libraries and in branches, and in time with a channel on Cable TV.

Each of these will be explained at greater length, and the most ambitious -- The City and Community Information Center concept-- will be developed in a separate section of the report.

It will be noted that the focal points do not include several present services which absorb significant parts of the Library's budget: provision of study and assignment materials for students in school, light diversional material for leisure-time reading, and adult nonfiction and fiction collections in branches. They now absorb at least 30 percent of the Library's operating funds,

so that de-emphasis and eventual elimination of these functions will make available $6,000,000 or more for building up the five primary functions. The rationale for de-emphasizing these several types of material is set forth after the focal points are explained.

1. The Free Library as Knowledge Workshop, The Resource Center for Seekers of Knowledge

The unique and distinctive function of the large city library is the provision of print and nonprint subject resources in some breadth and depth, providing the City and its people with recorded information, knowledge, ideas and inspiration not readily available elsewhere. This is the library as resource center and workshop for all those seeking to go beyond the publications commonly found on newstands and paperback racks, and in bookstores and school libraries. The motivated seeker is the target. The rationale for this model is that a great city needs some agency with the record of knowledge to which all people can turn to carry out their work, advance their studies, and improve their lives, and by these means to realize their potential and at the same time promote the well-being of their City.

Policy-makers, business and labor leaders, financial experts, professionals of various kinds, scientists, government officials, cultural innovators, engineers and advanced technicians, officials of organizations -- all of these need a supporting library to make their full contribution. A few groups of specialists -- lawyers and physicians in particular -- and a few business and industrial firms have built up strong libraries of their own, which is

evidence of the importance of such facilities. Most individuals in highly responsible and highly technical positions lack close and comprehensive library service, and Philadelphia suffers from this lack.

But it would be a mistake to see this concept as applying only to "leaders." Equally it will serve the adult seeking to make up for shortcomings in education, and the individual following a vocational or family or practical interest, and the resident working to improve the local neighborhood. This will be the knowledge workshop for people of limited as well as specialized background, as long as they are motivated to seek recorded knowledge.

1.1 It is proposed that this objective be concentrated in the Central Library and the regional units. It will not apply to the branches where it is not possible to build up the scope of subject resources necessary to meet the wide range of human interests. Seekers will go to the regional centers or to the central building, which is what many must do at present even though expensive and space-consuming adult nonfiction and fiction collections now stand in the branches. Instead of forty-nine partial and inadequate resources there will be a small number of strong, concentrated centers.

1.2 The three present regional libraries will of course be responsible for the Knowledge Workshop function in their respective parts of the City, short of the

comprehensive collection in Central. The load will be heavier on them under this plan, for the branches will not have standard adult fiction and nonfiction collections. Many (but by no means all) adult titles now in individual branches will be transferred to the regional buildings to provide reserves of duplicate copies to meet increased demand for the more popular publications. Extra effort will have to be made to publicize and promote area-wide use of the West Philadelphia and Northwest Philadelphia regionals, which do not get maximum use at present. Thc neighborhood units will have access to the computerized record of holdings in the regionals, and should follow up by calling ahead for users to determine if title sought are actually on the shelves. Prospective improvements in the shopping areas near where these two regionals stand will also promote use from a distance.

1.3 In additon, regional centers should be built up in two areas that now lack them, South Philadelphia and North Central Philadelphia. Specifically, it is proposed that the present South Philadelphia and Ramonita G. de Rodriquez branches be used for this purpose. Titles will be transferred from regular branch libraries to build up their collections. The model for these two additional regionals need not be the existing regional libraries. The new collections should be built up in response to the particular intersts and the educational

levels of South and North Philadelphia. Space will be a problem in the two buildings, but can be met by several measures. Meeting rooms in both can be sacrificed for book stack space. Collections in these two instances need not be as large as in existing regionals, partly because of the educational levels of the two communities and partly because direct curricular materials for students are not to be supplied under the plan proposed here (students will still use the regionals for term papers and individual projects). For reference service, dependence is to be placed on access to central computerized data banks, as these come into place, so that the reference collections in print form need not be as extensive as in the past. Also from the beginning heavy dependence should be placed on microforms for back runs of magazines. Area coordinators do not have to be located in the regional buildings in North and South Philadelphia, but could operate either from a central location or from offices in one of the larger branch structures in each area.

1.4 In the Central Library, the extensive subject departmentation needs review. As noted earlier in this report, new classifications for recent publications are spreading material on closely-related topics among several departments, which negates the purpose of subject departmentation and also increases the number of users who must go from section to section to satisfy their needs.

Further, extensive subject departmentation, requiring the staffing of service desks in every division even during non-peak hours when fewer staff members could handle the traffic, is an expensive form of service organization.

1.5 Departments to be examined first are Fiction and Prints and Pictures: the first of these will no longer have the function of providing recreational reading under the long-range plan, and its basic holdings of classical and modern authors could become part of the Literature Department. Prints and Pictures has built up a collection beyond the scope and purposes of The Free Library, which could be rectified by judicious discarding of holdings and by combination with the Art Department. A more fundamental reorganization would group many of the subject units under three broad divisions: humanitities, social studies, and science and technology. In gearing up for the 1980's, these and other possibilities of improving the functional basis of central service and of saving service costs should be examined by a task force. Former studies by John Cory and James Bryan will be of assistance in this endeavor.

1.6 At any rate, and without protracted study, the business resources and services of The Free Library should be concentrated in the Mercantile Library in the

business section of the City. Space will become available when the recreational reading function is removed from this as well as other units, as recommended in other parts of this report. In addition, Mercantile should become a municipal library, serving the offices in the nearby City Hall, supplementing the partial resources that have been built up there. The library on Chestnut Street could be at the frontier of providing computerized information both to business and government. Under this plan there will no longer be a section of materials on business in the central building.

1.7 Another direction of service-motivated reorganization would be a return of periodical holdings to the departments to which they apply and also the transfer of some audio-visual materials to subject departments. The present separation is prompted by staff shortages but is inconvenient for some users and cuts others off completely from nonprint sources. Building up of integrated collections -- rather than having books, periodicals and visual materials in separate units and rooms -- becomes feasible under the plan proposed here because the number of staff members in subject departments will be increased.

1.8 The essential point is that concentration on the Knowledge Workshop responsibility, with shifting of resources to this priority, will result in:

- stronger book and journal collections in Central departments

- addition of an average of two staff members to each department
- substantial extension of film, filmstrip and cassette resources, and addition of video discs as these appear
- duplication of subject titles in the regionals to meet circulation demand, reducing failures in service because material is out in use or missing
- restoration of hours of service both at Central and in the regionals
- librarians with substantial grounding in discrete subject fields
- building of varied bibliographical guides and aids to use, for motivated readers at all levels
- close and continuing contact and working relations between subject staff on the one side and users and organizations on the other, inside and outside the Library, thus building a closer professional-client relationship than exists at present.

1.9 A final change proposed for the Central Library is that it become reference only, with no circulation of regular subject resources. The main collection is the foundation of The Free Library. It should stand ready on the shelves to serve those who make the extra effort to get to the Central building. Having made the trip, they deserve to find what the Library owns. At present, with circulation and despite security efforts, the collection is dispersed and decimated by some materials being out in circulation, others lost in overdues, and some stolen. These depredations will not be entirely eliminated by making the Central unit reference only, but they will be controlled. The seekers of knowledge could come with the assurance that if the Library owns

the materials they seek, they will actually be able to use them. This change should not be interpreted as shifting the Central collection to an advanced research level; the function would remain the same -- service to seekers of knowledge below the level of scholars -- but the chance of actually delivering will be increased.

2. The Free Library as The Foundation Library for Children and Young People

The greatest promise for promoting love of reading, use of audiovisual materials, dependence on recorded information, and lifelong utilization of libraries rests in working with children and teenagers. It is in the younger years that interests are aroused, enthusiasms developed, skills perfected, and habits set.

It is the job of the school to teach reading, and this is accomplished with many if not with all youngsters. But technical skill is only part of the battle. Unless reading is nurtured, by stimulation and guidance that shows its rewards, the skill is little used except under compulsion, and for many it becomes a facility employed only when there is no alternative. Children's librarians in public libraries have demonstrated that they can maintain reading interest in many youngsters, and with more time and resources they could reach more of the younger generation. The record of accomplishment is not as clear at the teenage level, but the vital importance of this age level, for good or evil, supports extension of the effort at least into the early teen years.

It is true that children's use of The Free Library has declined steadily for over a decade. Two principle factors account for the drop: a definite decline in the number of children in the city, and the growth of school libraries for study materials. Providing study materials is the proper responsibility of the schools, and this report recommends that The Free Library not duplicate this provision. But it is in promoting life-long reading that the public library can join hands with the schools. And, despite the decline in children's use, The Free Library still has more of the younger generation registered (43 percent versus 28 percent of adults) and circulates 3.1 juvenile books per child in Philadelphia but only 2.0 per adult. Children have responded and they will increasingly respond to an intensified program. Here is the foundation, the fertile ground.

2.1 Service to children and young teenagers will be concentrated in the branches. The neighborhood units are to become predominantly agencies for younger users. While the branches will continue to serve adults, as the community information center and with resources relating to dominant local interests, the emphasis at this level will be on the earlier years. Many branches will want to consider shifting juvenile service to the larger space now devoted to adults, because one level will be expanding while the other contracts.

2.2 Each branch is to have a minimum of two professional librarians, one for younger patrons and one for teenagers,

and some will have three or even four librarians. This level of staff provision becomes possible under the staffing pattern proposed, with branches open 2½ days per week and with one high-powered crew handling two branches. One of the professionals will serve as branch librarian.

2.3 Service to children and teenagers should be marked by activities which draw them into the Library. Story hours, plays, and reading clubs have been successful methods of children's librarians. Such activities can be extended to include visual projects in a multimedia age, and can be modified to appeal to teenagers. The methods developed in the experimental Action Library near the center of Philadelphia should be studied. While overall that program was expensive, some of the approaches used there should be considered because they made the library for many children not just a place to go to get a good book but also a center of activity which drew in even the reluctant readers and led them to use of resources according to their individual inclinations.

2.4 Future children's and teenage service should make greater use of audiovisual material than holds at present in The Free Library. Young people have become accustomed to sound cassettes and filmstrips and other nonprint media, and are growing up in an environment marked by the various forms. They should be able in the Library to

use a tape recorder to hear their own speech, to view a filmstrip on an historical figure or an animal, to sit together to see films of different sports. The next jump in audiovisual equipment will be the video disc, permitting the viewing of documentary and feature films at low cost, and the first application of this technology may well be in neighborhood libraries before it becomes widespread in homes. Acquisition of more of this material will become feasible when branch materials budgets are no longer applied to maintainence of limited-use adult fiction and nonfiction collections.

2.5 One important level of juvenile service will be for the preschool years, introducing young children to pictures, sounds, and stories, that they begin to associate with words and print. Among all the federally-funded experiments in education that have failed, one notable success has been Headstart: Philadelphia also has an Early Childhood program provided by the schools and reaching some of the very young children. There is evidence that these programs prepare youngsters for school, but they reach only a portion of young children and the positive effect begins to be lost by the third and forth grades. The branches will coordinate with Headstart and Early Childhood in neighborhoods where it exists, and help to fill in the gap where it does not.

2.6 With increased personnel, children's librarians in

The Free Library can work closely with teachers in the schools. Children would learn skills in the classroom -- in the school library they would locate and use resources for study purposes -- in the public library they would be introduced to the whole range of literature and audiovisual materials, using collections to exercise their imaginations, follow their interests, and begin to understand the world. As a team, the teacher, the school librarian, and the public children's librarian could devise a joint program, affecting the several aspects of the youngster's life. With access to school records, the children's librarian would know much more about the abilities and problems of each individual child than at present. Thus, emphasis on this objective will affect not only collections and branches, but also will enhance the role of the librarian as professional.

2.7 Collections for children under this plan will have the whole range of children's classics and near-classics, current trade publications, and factual material to meet children's interests -- in substance the best of the juvenile collections now in The Free Library, with two exceptions. An extra effort will be made, particularly in lower-economic areas, to stress topics within the experience of local youngsters, and to avoid any imposition of "middle class" values in selection. On the other hand, the branch children's holdings will not include titles explicitly purchased to fulfill school assignments,

although such material will not be excluded if young readers are attracted to it separate from their school work.

2.8 The branch effort for young people should extend up into the early teen years, thirteen and fourteen. These are the years when childhood is left behind and adulthood is still not achieved. Guidance is needed, and has some chance of making or retaining contact so long as the relative sophistication of young teenagers is kept in mind. With at least two professionals in every branch, probably one will be oriented more toward the younger years and the other more toward adolescence, although the branch personnel should not be bound and restricted too rigidly by age levels.

2.9 Librarians in Philadelphia as elsewhere have not been particularly successful in keeping contact with young adults in the senior-high years. Some of course remain in the library fold and will use local branches for predominant-interest materials and regional libraries for more individual concerns. But many at this age level slip away, which is not only a loss to the Library but more importantly is a loss to the individual who may take years to get back in touch with the record of knowledge. It is proposed that a special and extraordinary effort be made during the last year of high school to get young adults into the public library habit. This effort should

not be focussed on school topics, which the young people are preparing to leave behind, but on emerging adult concerns such as continuing education, careers, personal relations, etc. This will be one of the special projects proposed under the priority, shortly to be set forth, for a central educational office (successor to the office of Work with Adults and Young Adults).

3. The Free Library As The Agency For Targeted Resource Materials For Local Life And Local Neighborhoods

Each branch is to have what could be called a "Local Action Collection" for adults. This is to be in place of present adult fiction, adult nonfiction, and adult recreational materials. Several purposes will be accomplished by this shift: highly-selected resources will directly apply to predominant interests and problems of the locality -- these resources can more readily be brought directly into the life of the neighborhood -- the standardized pattern of branch service will be broken -- and the least productive and lesser-used portion of branch holdings will be removed.

This does not mean that Philadelphians will be deprived either of factual or cultural publications. The dominant interests of each area will be served within the neighborhood and with adequate duplication of titles most in demand. Five regional libraries will stand behind the local outposts, with sizable fiction and non-fiction holdings. In Center City the scope and depth of the

Central Library and of the Mercantile Library will serve as the foundation and as the collection of last resort.

From an overall view of deployment of functions and resources, the effect of this plan will be to define the purposes of the several levels of facilities, to differentiate clearly among them, to avoid duplication, and to eliminate the temptation for branches to try to be what they do not have the capacity to be -- namely, subject libraries serving all or most of the interests of their communities.

3.1 The Local Action Collections for adults will not exceed 7,000-8,000 volumes, and in most cases will not be over 5,000-6,000 volumes. Typically they will be made up of a dozen or so interest groups, each with 300-500 titles, plus duplication of up to one-half of the selections in order to meed demand. Part of the purpose is to have resources which are not too extensive so that the scope and parts of the local collection can be readily comprehended by the user.

3.2 Each branch librarian, in consultation both with the educational resources staff at Central and with representatives of the local community, will designate the interest areas that predominate in the locality. The Central staff will build up the mini-collections on the topics designated. Volumes now in the branch collections will form the nucleus of each grouping. The titles within each interest will be standard and

will go out to the requesting branches as a package, but each branch will by no means request the same packages. When the time comes to change dominant topics in a branch, the whole packages on some topics will be removed and new interest groupings substituted.

3.3 The content or units in the Local Action Collections will reflect community differences. First attention should be given to socioeconomic projects and activities underway in the neighborhood, such as housing repair, retail-center rehabilitation, school improvement, a youth activities program, a senior-citizen center. Attention should be given to minority groups in residence, with packages obtained on black culture, on Hispanic culture, on the experience of the Oriental-American. Some branches will have one section devoted to "Basic Reading," low-reading level material on basic subject areas, while other branches will have none of this. Practical topics will constitute some of the collections, such as child care, health, home repair, gardening, financial investing. Other packages will be in humanistic fields, such as the fine arts, the classics, 20th Century fiction, biographies of historical and contemporary figures, etc. In "best-seller" communities, mini-collections of the more substantial of titles on the best-seller lists will be requested, while in other communities other interests will take precedence. Some topics may well apply to all or most neighborhoods, such as racial understanding, or

personal human relations, or sports. In all there are likely to be perhaps one hundred mini-collections prepared, of which a branch can select ten or twelve, and in addition special packages can be made up if an unusual interest comes to the fore in one or a few neighborhoods.

3.4 The topical packages should be thought of as long-term loans from a central reservoir rather than as parts of permanent local collections. Some units may stay in the branch for some years, but others will be changed at intervals as local projects are completed, as use of a particular package falls off, and as the neighborhood itself changes. Thus, a mini-collection in support of a physical rehabilitation project may not be needed in a year or two when the project is completed, or -- on a longer time line -- a special section on child care may not be needed as the nearby population grows older. Black culture holdings will not be retained if a neighborhood becomes predominantly Puerto Rican. Over a decade the Local Action Collections will significantly change in most cases.

3.5 Each branch will have a small working collection for reference purposes. This should be kept to not more than 200 titles (perhaps 400 volumes, no more than four cases), including both juvenile and adult material. Questions beyond this limited resource should be referred to a regional library, the referral usually in the form

of an immediate telephone call (paid for by the Library). As the computerized information facility of The Free Library develops, branches will have terminals connected to a large central data bank, thus opening direct access within each branch and neighborhood to the full reference capacity of the Library.

3.6 Classification, cataloging and shelf arrangement must be rethought for the Local Action Collections. Conventional classification and cataloging will not be needed. Materials will stand on the shelves by interest groupings, with each group clearly identified for the user. A system of marks on the spines or dust jackets of books will identify the mini-collection to which they belong, and within interest groupings the arrangement of the few hundred titles will be alphabetically by author. Each subgroup will have a typed bibliography, with brief annotations, this list to be available in quantity for patrons who wish a copy. Display cases, again clearly identified, should be used to feature key titles in each grouping. With the small number of adult books that will be held, and the space available, the opportunity opens of stimulating display and merchandising of resources, with something of the physical appeal of the best bookstores. At the same time, each branch will have electronic access to the complete catalog of holdings of the regional libraries and the central collection, to inform users of what the total system contains and

hopefully to increase intralibrary loan in the delivery of materials locally for those who cannot or prefer not to go to a regional center or to Logan Square.

4. The Free Library As The People's University, With Educational Projects Animating The Supply Function Of The Institution

The term "People's University" for the public library has been overused and has lost much of its meaning. But the concept is still valid, and can be used in these next years to serve goals and interests necessary to the survival of Philadelphia.

Actually The Free Library, like other city libraries, has been serving only to a limited extent as an educational institution, if any clear meaning is given to the term. Formerly there were Americanization projects, personal reading advising, organized reading courses, and frequent book discussion groups. Each exhibited the twin requirements of an educational program: a defined sense of what was to be accomplished, and adoption of methods suited to purposes. Only a few examples of activities can now be found in the Library that fit this definition -- the Reader Development Program, the Lifelong Learning Center, the vocational guidance efforts -- which together involve less than one percent of Free Library expenditures, and which have been declining. There has been steady maintenance of group meetings and programs of various kinds, some of which no doubt have educational impact, but many of which are unclear as to purpose,

short-term in their execution, scattered in their effect, and in some cases very similar to what other agencies are providing.

Here as in other parts of the plan proposed for The Free Library, the theme is "concentrate and strengthen." The educational program is to be conceived in a central office and then projected throughout the system as parts of it are needed in particular localities and by particular audiences. More adequate and more consistent educational activities can be achieved in such a structure.

4.1 The intensified educational program, rather than being fragmented in design and execution among 52 regional libraries and branches, is to be centralized in the successor to the present Office of Work with Adults and Young Adults, an office of Educational Services for Adults. This office will mount a two-pronged endeavor. One part will be centralized both in design and execution, with an integrated sequence of activities located usually in the Central Library; the Lifelong Learning Center is an example. Individuals will be referred to the single, central location from anywhere in the library system. The other prong will be composed of programs planned and often staffed centrally, but conducted in branch libraries on request. The branches will make their choice of educational activities even as they make their choice of book packages for Local Action Collections.

4.2 The structure for administering educational programs for adults will thus contrast with that for service to children. The key points in the latter will be the central Office of Work with Children and the various branches. Each local unit will have two professional librarians for young readers, responsible for mounting children's programs under policies laid down by the central office; regional coordinators for children's service will not be necessary. In contrast there will be no adult professionals in the branches. Adult educational staff will be concentrated in the downtown office and in regional coordinators. The former will design and prepare programs while the latter will carry them into branches and sometimes conduct the activities themselves. It will be seen that under this plan the branches are to be primarily children's libraries, with selected adult resources and programs brought in from a common pool as needed by the local community and depending on community response.

4.3 Educational programs as conceived here are to take many forms and use all possible materials. As appropriate, tried-and-proven methods of films, book talks, guest speakers, performers, special events, and book discussion groups are to be used. Fresh patterns should also be sought, as made possible by opportunity and ingenuity. Provocative exhibits, giveaway summaries of issues, tie-ins with television programs, senior citizen get-

togethers, hobby demonstrations come to mind. But the key consideration is not method but purpose and structure. Each program must be planned with explicit educational goals, a clear conception of what participants are to "learn." Whatever methods are used, the program should have enough continuity to have a reasonable chance of achieving those goals. Anything less can readily degenerate into scattered events for their own purpose, something for an occasional attendee to do if no social activities are scheduled as against a plan of informal study aimed at some goal. Giving purpose, direction and continuity to programs and sequences of programs doesn't mean that they have to be solemn or dull.

4.4 It must be stressed that this educational model is not designed solely for an elite with advanced aesthetic and intellectual interests, but extends across the various income levels and applies as much to the adult illiterate as to the college graduate -- the university of all the people. In fact, efforts directed at less-educated persons will predominate, for those with more background are better able to fashion their own goals and methods. Skillful utilization of educational films and recordings make it possible to reach people who are not comfortable with print. Job dislocations, second careers, greater opportunities for women, tensions in family life, neighborhood rehabilitation efforts, inflation, consumer problems, Hispanic and Asian newcomers -- these and

many other interests of low-education communities provide opportunities for the Library, if it marshalls its forces and hangs on.

4.5 It would be a mistake to think of educational services as necessarily being group activities. On the contrary, the special attraction of library service for many people is its individual character, the chance to pursue an interest at one's own time, pace, and level. There is little prospect of sufficient personnel to re-establish an intensive reader's advisory service for adults, but the old-fashioned device of reading lists can be used to much greater advantage than occurs in The Free Library at the present time. Whether the topic is auto repair or energy conservation, the Middle East or birdwatching, cross-country skiing or futuristic art, the well-selected and briefly annotated list can be an educational guide. The one requirement is that the titles on the list actually be available; no list should be sent out without duplicate copies of the cited books available -- either that or it is better not to bother to prepare lists at all.

4.6 The educational topics presented by the Library should in all cases involve library materials. It is not the role of the Library to put on lectures or plays or concerts or demonstrations that have no relation to the collections. The relationship need not involve detailed study of assigned readings, but the special

quality of the public library as educator is the background which its resources can provide, the adjustability of its readings to different individuals, and the further exploration which the collections make possible. But, as in the case of titles on reading lists, this means that the actual books must be present. Travelling collections should therefore accompany educational programs as they go out to the branches.

4.7 Money should be budgeted for the Office of Educational Services for Adults to hire special personnel for individual programs and for special materials, rather than depending heavily on volunteer "teachers." Private grants should still be solicited, and in fact should increase as The Free Library demonstrates capacity to put on book-related educational projects that make an impact and draw public attention. But the office must be in a position where it does not have to wait for what may turn up, but can plan its own campaign and carry it through.

4.8 Nothing in the emphasis here on an active and agressive educational program in The Free Library, with means to proceed on its own initiative, should be interpreted as eliminating projects in connection with other educational agencies. The current GED courses, put on by the Board of Education, in library quarters and using library books, are a case in point. In this case the purpose of the activity, and its methods, are

decided by another agency, yet library resources are clearly used for educational ends.

5. The Free Library as City and Community Information Center

It is a cliche to say that this is an information-dependent age, and becoming steadily more so. As the IBM advertisement says, information is power. What people need regularly is factual data that pertains to their work and their personal lives, their interests and problems, their hopes and ambitions. In time "disadvantaged" persons will be those cut off from information, rich as well as poor.

"Information" as used here does not cover the whole range of present library resources. There is a distinction between knowledge, wisdom, insight, appreciation on the one hand and information on the other. The latter is specific, utilitarian and functional. It is the raw material that people use to make decisions and reach conclusions, not the background knowledge that they seek in general education. Much of the information sought is very current, for it usually applies to present, practical matters.

Everyone seeks to acquire information for their daily lives, from the consumer preparing for a shopping trip to the scientist in the laboratory. Employer and employee alike need access to information to be productive. People look in newspapers and magazines, turn to radio or television, ask family

and friends, inquire on the job, look for government bulletins, consult professional and technical sources. What is wanted may not be located when needed. Most of what is found is fragmentary; the searcher finds one needed piece but not another. Some information that is available is inaccurate, outdated, or even purposely biased. The informed business enterprise, the informed government office, the informed worker, the informed citizen are all illusions unless there is a recognized, available, organized, up-to-date, comprehensive, balanced and trustworthy source of pertinent data.

It is proposed that The Free Library, over a five-year period, move into the forefront of information service in Philadelphia. It is already in the information business, it has experience with computerized data bases, it knows how to gather and organize data, it is not affiliated with any political or economic interest. The Library can become the first point of contact, a pre-eminent information center in its own right, and the referral agency to unpublished and obscure sources. Philadelphia cannot afford to be without an information utility as it fights for economic viability and social stability in the 1980's.

At the same time, it must be recognized that information provision, like the provision of print, will range from the most esoteric to the most trivial. The Library must find its place in the wide spectrum. Further, it must also be recognized that the Library -- for all its emphasis on reference service

these many years -- is not thought of as a first source of data by many people. It is easy to enter never-never land in projecting library information services, envisioning a role that will be beyond the capacity of the institution, competing with services that are better provided by commercial sources.

Because The Free Library as City and Community Information Center is seen as one of its major purposes by 1990, and because this prospect is filled with uncertainities, a separate section of this report is devoted to computerized information provision. The possibilities and problems in this venture will be examined after indentifying those present functions which the Library is to de-emphsize and eliminate in order to concentrate on the five priority goals just presented.

SERVICES TO BE CURTAILED

Discontinuing any library services presents hard choices; all now provided can be defended as having some value. But it is not overly dramatic to say that the choices must be made if The Free Library is to control its destiny. Failure to reach decisions, continuation of the effort to provide too much with too little, will push the Library into a position of insignificance among city services. In time, as the pressures on municipal budgets mount, curtailments will be imposed from the outside, whether in the closing of branches, cuts in the salary appropriation, or elsewhere.

Three rather significant aspects of The Free Library's

present program are proposed here for de-emphasis and for discontinuation as soon as feasible. However, each of these is really a component in a plan for improvement of service, and should be viewed from this standpoint and presented to the public in this light. The overall program outlined in this report is not a plan for curtailing but for strengthening service, and for doing so by concentrating on essential functions and by the most productive deployment of resources among the agencies of the Library and between the Library and other sources of reading materials.

A fourth aspect of service, the several research collections, also needs re-examination. They do not absorb as much of the Library's budget as the three first discussed, but the $400,000 per year which they require should not be immune to review.

Coordination With The Schools In The Provision of Study Materials, With The Free Library Not Attempting To Provide Required School Reading

At the present time two library systems are maintained for children and young people in Philadelphia, in the schools and in the public library. This in itself would not be undesirable or wasteful, if the two systems avoided duplication and together gave adequate service to students. But this is not the case.

The school libraries, both elementary and secondary, have as their first responsibility the provision of study materials necessary for curricular topics and for assignments. They do not achieve this, as evidenced by children and teenagers flocking

into the public libraries to do their school work. The teacher directs a class to read on a given topic -- the first few students who get to the school library exhaust its resources on the subject -- the others turn to the public library after school -- here again only a few can be supplied. At the same time, the school libraries seek to go on to a second responsibility and stock good voluntary reading stories for younger children and personal-interest material for older students, this in line with the school's aim of not only examining specific subjects but in educating the whole child. The result is that neither responsibility is adequately discharged in the schools.

The public library from its side gets caught in the same bind. Its stated responsibility is voluntary reading and supplementary materials, to develop reading skills and habits and to introduce the young person to the world beyond the school walls. But students come in with assignments on Alaska or insects or American presidents or energy. The public library calls on what it has on these topics and then seeks to buy more from its circumscribed book budget -- after all, these are serious students seeking to do their required school work. Thus the community agency is drawn away from its stated responsibility and into the purpose for which the school libraries were established.

Neither the collection in the schools nor the collection in the community meets the student's needs either for assignment materials or for general reading. The loser is the child and teenager. They are frustrated and turned off by a school system that cannot meet their needs. Small wonder that library use

falls off in the high-school years and drops sharply after graduation. The two institutions have failed to plan together, to coordinate the limited resources at the command of each, and the young person is the victim.

While a study made for a public library cannot properly tell the schools what they should do, it can recommend that The Free Library stick to its last and carry out its function of supplying children and teenagers with the wide world of books beyond those specifically needed for school work. This in turn will place liability on the schools to provide the publications they expect their students to read for assignments, just the same as they provide equipment for what they expect students to do in the laboratory or in the workshop or on the ball field. There is no point in making assignments and casting the students upon the community where the materials do not exist. If the schools forthrightly accept what is clearly their responsibility, they are likely to make some changes in their methods: giving the student some time during the school day to use library materials, keeping school libraries open for an hour after school, varying assignments so that large groups are not all asked to consult the same resources. The result will be greater return from resources available -- and students who have the satisfaction and encouragement of successfully carrying out an educational task.

On its side the public library would concentrate on materials which supplement but do not duplicate the school program. Picture books for preschoolers, stories for children learning to read,

noncurricular subject publications for older children reaching out to the world, materials to match the emerging adult interests of adolescents -- these the community agency would be expected to supply in sufficient quantity to nurture generations of readers and lifelong users of information sources. It will have greater opportunity to achieve this goal because it will not be buying materials required by the schools.

It is not proposed that The Free Library unilaterally stop acquiring school-related publications. Young people have been hurt enough by the present disjointed setup and should not be hurt further in a changeover. Rather the top officials of the school systems and of the Library should sit down and work out the transition. Actually they will only be reaffirming what is the theoretical policy of each at the present time, but they will be seeing to it that a coordinated program really comes into place and works.

Costs would not be materially increased on either side, except where schools have irresponsibly made assignments and then left students to fend for themselves in getting what is needed. Knowing what they can expect from the other side, each institution can focus on its own task. And the student will also know what to expect from each, and will reap the benefit of educational agencies working together.

For The Free Library, this plan will free money that can go into more materials for children and young adults, and it will also free time now used in helping young people with school assignments, which can go into the guidance of general reading

and media use. Time and appropriate materials will also be gained to carry out the program focussed on high-school seniors which was previously recommended. Coordination with the schools and school libraries thus contributes directly to the theme of "concentrate and strengthen."

Elimination Of The Supplying Of Ephemeral Diversional Reading As A Public Library Responsibility

The word "recreation" was purposely not used in the heading above. The term is slippery, and means different things to different people. Some people get their recreation by reading Plato and others by solving mathematical puzzles. Adults often derive re-creation from reading great novels or going through early history.

But in its effort to supply all demands, The Free Library is buying considerable quantities of light reading produced solely to fill leisure time. The volumes sit in the cases marked "romances" and "mystery stories" and "westerns" and "gothic novels" and "science fiction" and on the "new books" shelves along with publications that have definite value for the priorities previously set forth. These same emhemeral titles bulk large in circulation, taking the time of desk staffs, even as they have already taken the time of acquisition staffs.

There is nothing in the world wrong with publishing or with reading light diversional titles. The question is whether public money should be used for the purpose, when the titles are widely

available in paperback form and when educational, cultural, and utilitarian material is lacking in the collection. We do not expect to attend entertaining movies free of personal expense, or professional sports events, or bars or night clubs, or other places of diversion. Devoting scarce library money to this purpose may not be fiddling while Rome burns, but it is dawdling while Philadelphia struggles.

The argument is advanced that it may be very well to expect people of comfortable income to buy their own paperback books for diversional reading, but what about poor people? The argument breaks down precisely because poor people do not use books to any extent for relaxation, and if they do use reading for this purpose it is usually in magazines, and mostly in magazines that the Library does not stock. If the concern is for effective use of public money to help the lot of people of very low income, provision of romantic novels and mystery stories would not rank high on any list.

Even as the term "recreation" has not been used to describe the publications to be eliminated, so the term "best-seller" has also not been mentioned. Some titles on the lists of the most popular current books are ephemeral publications issued solely for diversion, but others have substance for the educational goals previously set forth, and some may even be the classics of tomorrow. The fact that a book is current and well-received does not necessarily make it inconsequential. Taking the current best-seller lists as a case in point the top fiction listing, a long

novel about South African history (James Michener's "The Covenent") will probably take its place along with his other works as a minor classic, while several spy stories now on the list will be gone both from the list and from memory in a short time; Judith Krantz' "Princess Daisy," which had a sensational sales record a few months ago, has already departed from the best seller category (what does The Free Library plan to do with the copies it bought?). The more substantial of current publications will of course be acquired for the central and regional collections, and they will be a prime source for building up the Local Action Collections in branches.

It must be stressed that the recommendation that The Free Library discontinue providing light diversional publications does not rest on aesthetic but on practical considerations. As has been said more than once, either the Library will decide where to aim or it will miss the target.

Replacing Standard Branch Adult Nonfiction and Fiction Collections With Smaller And More Relevant Local Action Collections

From the beginning the purposes and functions of branches in public library systems were not clearly differentiated from the central unit. They were conceived as smaller replicas of Central, with reference resources, adult fiction collections from A to Z, adult nonfiction subject collections from 000 to 999, some magazines and some pamphlets and in time some sound recordings, lighter publications for those who sought diversion, children's

sections, and in some cases young adult sections. The only difference in emphasis (as distinct from quantity) was in greater proportional provision of juvenile publications, a natural development in units within reach of children.

At an earlier stage the standard collection may have been justified. The number of new titles issued each year was smaller and the subject interests of adults were less diversified, so that a relatively small nonfiction resource had some chance of meeting a fair proportion of local demand. Also, in earlier decades, secondary-level students bulked large in branch patronage, and for school work they used both subject material and classical and contemporary authors from the fiction shelves; now they obtain more of this material from their school libraries, and this is one factor in the decreased use of branches. Perhaps most important, at an earlier stage when The Free Library did not face financial restrictions, it could afford to maintain standard collections all around the City even though they were not heavily used, and did not have to take the hard look prompted by the present financial climate.

Increasingly in recent years the branch nonfiction collections have not been able to match the wide range of interests within communities. This does not refer to quantity of demand, which is small for individual topics, but to the variety of topics which are of interest to at least a few people, and which the branch tries to meet by having at least some titles in most subjects ranging from philosophy and religion to history and biography.

The branches have not been able to keep up, which in turn has led to a falling off in use. The stretches of adult nonfiction shelves in branches are the least used -- the least productive -- of the investment in the branches, and not far behind are the classical authors, the established 20th century authors, and the popular authors of yesteryear that sit on the adult fiction shelves. As a measure of use, from one-third to one-half of branch circulation is children's materials, for youngsters up through thirteen years of age; in eight branches the juvenile proportion exceeded 50 percent in fiscal 1980. No breakdown is made of adult circulation, but questions to the branch librarians brought out estimates of half to two-third of of adult use concentrated on the displays of current books and on diversionary sections and not on the regular fiction and nonfiction shelves, particularly with teenage student use falling off.

What we have in branches in adult fiction and nonfiction holdings which physically occupy half or more of the buildings, which are expensive to keep up in terms of new additions, and which yet do one-quarter or less of the business of agencies. And there are not just a few of these that Philadelphia is struggling to maintain, but forty-nine in every section of the City. The problem will not ease off, for the collections on the shelves have been depleted by loss and branch book budgets are down, yet the flood of new publications continues, outdating existing holdings not only in such rapidly-changing areas as science, technology and health but also in government, business,

psychology, vocations, education, home maintenance and other subjects. The first need reported in most agencies is replacement of outdated reference volumes, so the library does not dispense inaccurate information. A substantial investment would be necessary to make the branch adult collections current and balanced; within a few years all of the possible book funds would have to be devoted to this purpose alone, at the expense of the Central collection, the regional libraries, and juvenile acquisitions.

The Free Library in substance recognized that the branch collections were not able to achieve what they were intended to do when the regional libraries were established. Subject readers were not able to satisfy their needs in the branches, so intermediate-level collections were opened for them in their regions. But the many local adult collections were continued. This was fine so long as funds were adequate, because some local people could find what they wanted in a nearby outlet. Continuation of this policy through the inflation of the 1970's has not only reduced the capacity of the branches to serve adults even at a limited level, but has actually pulled down the rest of the holdings in the system. The branch addult collections, as now conceived, constitute the proverbial albatross of The Free Library.

The Local Action Collections recommended as one of the five priorities for the next period will relieve the situation. Instead of adult holdings of 20,000-30,000 volumes, the branches will have one-quarter that number. Instead of hanging on to resources that become steadily outdated, they will have current publications that will be replaced when use declines. Instead of

trying unsuccessfully to serve as general reference libraries, they will refer inquirers to the regional libraries and put them in touch with a central data bank. Most important, rather than seeking to have a little bit for everybody, they will have adequate resources for predominant local interests.

Special Collections To Become More Self-Supporting

The Free Library has two notable special collections, Rare Books and the Fleischer collection of musical scores, and three additional sections, on the theater, history of the automobile, and choral music (the Drinker Collection) that also possess depth well above the rest of the holdings. The first two are in adequate and accessible quarters, but the latter three are away in cramped and somewhat hidden facilities.

Each in some way got started from private gifts. The Library provides staff and quarters, mostly from general funds. The two larger collections cost $282,000 a year, and the three smaller units add another $125,000. These figures are for personnel salaries, fringe benefits, utilities and maintenance. Thus the special collections together absorb something over $400,000, two percent of the Library's budget.

The cost is modest and the special resources add to the prestige of The Free Library in some quarters. They are small jewels in a crown made of less precious materials. At the same time, they are outside the main purposes of the Library, being at

an advanced research or special level, whereas the bulk of holdings are more at the collegiate level or below, and aimed at larger, less specialized groups in the City. They serve small, esoteric groups (although some attempt has been made to expose high-school students to the treasures in Rare Books). More than in other parts of The Free Library, patronage is from outside as well as within the Philadelphia area.

In a tight budget, even expenditures that will approach a half-million dollars in a few years deserve examination. The several collections had private origins, and special efforts should be made to secure private funds for continuing staffing and maintenance of them. Properly presented, support may well be received from selected individuals, either users of the special collections or independent collectors in these fields. Philadelphia supports other cultural activities privately -- The Philadelphia Orchestra is a notable example -- and while the audiences for the special collections are not as large, neither are the amounts of money involved, and persons with special interests can often be persuaded to come to the aid of facilities that occupy a particular place in their lives. Certain of the smaller family foundations may also be enlisted in the cause. To this point there has been little if any effort by the Library to seek additional outside money for these services.

Both the heads of the special collections and the general administration, particularly the division chief for the Central Library, should be drawn into a planned campaign. Selected individuals within the city-wide Friends of the Library can also

be enlisted. Three years devoted to the effort should determine whether any significant part of personnel costs for the several collections can be obtained from private sources, either in the form of endowment or of annual pledges.

Another source to consider is fees for use of these resources. In general fees are not proposed in this report as a means to get the Library out of its financial bind, because this belies the very name of the institution and because fees would discriminate against lower-income communities that particularly need pragmatic information to work out their lives. But charges for services are possible in exceptional circumstances where resources have been built up for a very small number of people who make intensive use of them. In fact the Drinker Collection already uses this approach with both a membership fee and a use fee. In such cases fees can be thought of as small, individual gifts to help maintain services that would not normally be within the province of the public library.

If private help in one form or another is not forthcoming for the special collections, consideration must then be given to finding new homes for such of these as cannot engender outside support. The material has value, but if it cannot be sustained without making an inroad on scarce public dollars, alternatives should be sought where the collections will get adequate staffing and housing.

III. COMPUTERIZED INFORMATION IN THE FUTURE PROGRAM OF THE FREE LIBRARY

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Provision of information -- specific factual data -- has long been a function of The Free Library, under the name of "reference service." The Library was in the business before the electronic age, before storage and retrieval by computer and before transmission by telephone and television. Why did it not then move into a commanding position in the field? Because traditional library methods did not provide an effective means for organizing the increasing quantities of factual data being utilized by the society, because these methods did not provide ready access out to the information consumer. The computer, combined with electronic transmission, provides the answer to all three problems.

This development constitutes both an opportunity for and a threat to the Library. It could ten years hence occupy a much more strategic role in information provision, or it could be bypassed by a host of commercial systems coming into existence. Indeed, if the commercial systems would do the full job, reaching all who need and seek information, a case could be made for the Library dropping out of reference work and concentrating on the print supply function. But the emerging sysems are fragmented and aimed at the centers (business, industry, research) which are profitable. The public sector will not be served without some public agency in the act.

The future program projected in this report proposes that The Free Library step in and perform information functions essential to Philadelphia. The Library has some initial experience with computerized information, but not nearly as much as with the

other four areas proposed as priorities. Moreover, the future of information is fraught with uncertainties, so that it is easy for a library to get in too deep too fast. Therefore this separate section of the report is devoted to computerized information, to what role The Free Library can play, and to the steps necessary to take advantage of the new opportunity.

FUTURE OF COMPUTERIZED INFORMATION

The remainder of the 20th century will be marked by information storage and retrieval by computer. There are inherent advantages of automated data control that will inevitably expand its role: compact storage, rapid retrieval, ease of updating, centralization of data gathering and organization, and remote access by electronic means. Computers and electronic transmission combined will make it possible 1. to control the vast quantities of information on which contemporary business, civic and personal life depends, and 2. to transmit data conveniently to people where it is needed and used. It is not too strong to say that this is the next revolution in the organization of modern societies.[1]

Much of the necessary technology is now available, but the institutional and commercial structures for a comprehensive information distribution system, reaching all people, are only now coming into place. The test will be whether equitable distribution of information will be achieved, or whether -- as with other forms

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1 Branscomb, L.W. "Information; the Ultimate Frontier." Science 203: 143-47, January 12, 1979.

of wealth -- some people have ready access while others do not, thus dividing the society into the "information rich" and the "information poor." The public library has opened access to knowledge in print form to all; it can serve the same purpose for computerized information, and indeed this is one of its great opportunities in the next decade or two.

Internal information control systems (in banks, airlines, etc.) are already in wide use and such internal systems will extend to smaller enterprises. There are automated data programs in specialized fields (medicine, law, metallurgy, etc.) and more will appear. One retailer (FIND) provides information on a fee basis to 600 large companies. Large telecommunication companies are getting into the business. Data banks with current, utilitarian information on everyday life (weather, shopping data, community events, theater listings, sports, etc.) are now on the market. Small computers have appeared in homes and offices and these too will steadily increase in numbers.

What will remain for the library? If data is gathered centrally, if it is marketed by commercial vendors, if recipients will get information directly, what place is left for a public agency?

Commercial data provision will not provide comprehensive information for all people, any more than commercial publishing provides people with all the printed sources they need. Libraries do not exist because the society lacks books but because matters of cost and access prevent many people from acquiring all the

print they need, so a group agency is maintained for the purpose. Many people have regular access to some printed sources -- newspapers, a home dictionary, a few books they own, popular magazines -- but not to the material needed at intervals. Some buy the additional sources needed, others turn to a library, and still others combine the two. The "cutoff" point and "mix" of commercial and public sources differs for different individuals, depending on their interests and on their ability to pay for publications.

These same factors will operate in computerized information provision. The data most readily available for home consumption will be newspaper-like in character, and will either be part of cable TV packages or available as separate components on a fee basis. More specialized automated sources will exist but will require additional expenditures. For many people the cutoff point will be reached, and they will look for a noncommercial source for information.

This is where libraries fit in; they will function in this area as they have for printed materials. Individuals in homes, offices and organizations may "buy" the information they need constantly or regularly, but they will seek to "borrow" the information they need less frequently. Libraries may even occupy a more recognized place in the emerging information distribution structure than they have in the past, because computerized data for most people will not be as economical to come by as the information they now get from newspaper, television, and radio.

It is for this reason that automated information provision has been set as one of the priorities of The Free Library for the next ten years.

There is a place for The Free Library in information provision in Philadelphia. In fact, there will be a gap in needed facilities if the Library does not fulfill its role, and there will be people denied access to what in great part is a common possession. In particular, smaller businessess and organizations, and individuals who are not affluent will be affected. There is no service that The Free Library can offer that is more likely to reach people in low-income communities who may not be regular book readers but who seek practical information to get through their daily lives. By the same token, the many persons with a foreign-language background who have recently settled in Philadelphia -- Hispanics, Koreans, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Russians -- will benefit from an emphasis upon information.

Furthermore the Library from its side can contribute to the information entered in data banks. It possesses a large bibliographic record for directing people to printed sources of information, and this comprehensive catalog is currently being converted to machine-readable form: it holds many of the sources of data on which computerized records must draw. If libraries commit themselves to automated information, a kind of partnership can be formed with commercial sources in this field, as it has in the field of book publishing.

However, the role of The Free Library must be clarified and defined. It is easy to enter never-never land in projecting the future of automated information. The library has never been the only or even the primary source of reading materials and it is not going to be the only or primary source of information, automated or otherwise.

Furthermore, and most importantly, The Free Library must be prepared to take definite steps to fulfill its role. The Library as a partner in a comprehensive automated information system will not happen automatically.

This challenge comes at the wrong time for The Free Library, when it lacks the funds even to maintain its traditional services, but the challenge must be faced. This report proposes that automated information provision by The Free Library be separated financially from regular appropriations of money and financed by earmarked public funds, so that the new venture has adequate funding and so that it does not drain away from support for other parts of the Library.

ROLE OF THE FREE LIBRARY

The potential place of The Free Library in a total information system can be identified by analyzing the different forms and purposes of computerized data. Here are the main types:

- bibliographic data banks (think of these as catalogs or indexes in machine-readable form)
- information data banks (think of these as reference books in machine-readable form)

- textual data banks (think of these as library collections in machine readable form)

The first type is now available in a variety of fields, from medicine to current news. The second type is just now appearing on the market and will proliferate in the next ten years. The third type, the full text of articles and books in computers, exists only in an experimental and fragmentary stage.

Bibliographic data bases

The main customers for bibliographical data bases, which provide citations to sources of information but not the information itself, have been libraries, and this is likely to remain the case. Only large organizations, businesses and research centers will subscribe to bibliographic data bases (other than one that the library itself can supply, which will be mentioned shortly). Persons seeking information have made only partial progress toward their goal if they have a list of citations, which they then have to take to a library to find out what is actually available -- they might as well go to a library in the first place. Bibliographic data bases constitute another, more detailed and more current form of bibliography for the use of libraries. Such automated sources in no way substitute for or replace libraries -- in fact, the user must have access to established collections or the bibliographic information is of limited value.

A library which utilizes automated bibliographic sources is

simply improving access to its regular resources and by this means getting greater return from the investment it has already made in books, journals and reports.

Bibliographic data bases exist at various levels, from the most general (such as the New York Times Information Bank) to the more specialized (such as Medline, maintained by the National Library of Medicine). The Free Library must be selective among these sources or it will find itself with expensive systems that are little used. This is not a research library and it will not become so in these next years; it should resist the temptation to subscribe to bibliographic data bases which cite publications which the Library does not possess and which it will not acquire.

The experience of The Free Library with automated sources in the past few years illustrates the point. The Library acquired data bases from two vendors (Systems Development Corporation and Bibliographic Retrieval Services) which were expensive, which included many citations to materials not in the collection, and which were little used. There was no choice except to drop them (Lockheed Information Systems has been retained). In a sense this was a step back, not so much in dropping services not used but in leaving a negative impression of the value of automated bibliography in the subject departments that had terminals.

The lesson learned should be kept in mind. It would be better to stay with computerized sources consistent with the Library's mission and public and push for maximum use of these selected data bases, rather than extending and diversifying into more specialized

fields. The more sophisticated and research level sources will be acquired by universities and research centers.

There will be more and more non-research data bases and many of these must be acquired by The Free Library. Either it will subscribe to those services that relate to its holdings or the Library will in substance fail to open access to materials which it already has and those which it acquires in the future. To fail to acquire such automated sources would be similar to failure to acquire important new printed bibliographies as they appear.

The Free Library has committed itself to preparing a major bibliographic data base of its own. This is the automated catalog to the holdings of the Library, for which a contract was recently awarded. The product will be an internal guide to resources, replacing the card catalog and the book catalogs, and providing control in locating items held. More than that, the automated catalog, once in place, can be consulted at remote terminals in homes, offices and organizations. At that point The Free Library will become not just the purchaser of data "published" elsewhere but also a producer of automated data itself. Making the automated library catalog available to users of remote terminals should follow naturally from the creation of this tool for use within the Library. Here is where the Library will react directly with commercial data vendors, for it will have a product which they seek.

How the computerized catalog will be made directly available to remote stations outside the library system is still to be worked

out, and will depend on developments in Philadelphia. One alternative is a library channel on cable TV. Another is inclusion of the Library's data bank of holdings in the packages assembled by commercial vendors, who would be expected to pay the Library as they pay any other "manufacturer." Still another alternative is a Library Data Bank available without charge in the Library and also available by subscription to users in homes and offices, who would be paying for the convenience of direct access. If more convenient locations do not work out, there is even the possibility of access terminals in shopping centers, extending bibliographical and reference outlets beyond the branch buildings.

If the catalog can be consulted at a distance, what about remote delivery of the items located by means of the catalog? Actual physical delivery of books and journals would be expensive, whether by mail or by other means. But if electronic channels can carry a catalog of several million entries, they can also carry a book of several hundred pages. This involves texual data bases, which we will shortly see are some time in the future.

The full advantage of these bibliographic tools -- whether acquired from the outside or made in-house -- will not be realized unless staff members are as familiar with them as they are with printed bibliographies. The new automated guides must take their place along with traditional guides and be used simply as another aid and often a more analytical aid. If staff members mentally put the newer guides off in a separate category because of their unfamiliar technological form and if terminals within the Library

are located away from regular service points, automated information will not be fully utilized. Either librarians will accept and relate to the new forms, becoming "information scientists" to a degree, or The Free Library will play only a marginal role as an information source in this next decade. The test is not so much in acquiring suitable bibliographic data bases as they become available, but in staff utilization of them once they are accessible to the Library, both for their own searches and in helping users.

Library administrators as well as service-line staff must give adequate attention to and be prepared to adjust to a new technology. In a time of financial restrictions, such as The Free Library faces at present, much managerial time must perforce go to preserving the status quo, trying to protect past strength. Under these circumstances, the tendency is to provide funds and support first to established divisions and then to a new service such as computerized information only if some money is left over. This is a strategy for preserving the institution of the 1960's but not to build the agency needed in the 1980's and after. The computerized information revolution requires administrators to raise their sights and in effect be prepared to design what in time will become a new library.

In addition to impact on staff, bibliographic data bases also affect collections. The services available thus far include references to materials never acquired for The Free Library's collections and to materials once in the collections and now lost. Users can be frustrated at this point -- they cannot get their hands on the sources cited. Collections, and bibliographic guides

to collections, should be synchronized. As a general principle (subject to exceptions), only those bibliographic data bases should be acquired that are coordinated with actual holdings. Further, such bases and future selection of materials must be in step, in the sense that titles cited frequently should receive first consideration for acquisition. Similarly, interlibrary loan should be fitted into the pattern, to obtain temporarily the items cited but not held.

A basic problem of large libraries has been the maintenance of a complete delivery system, from the user's initial needs to the actual sources in his or her hands. Too many obstacles get in the way of achieving this elementary goal, too many misses occur somewhere along the way. The searcher starts in high hope and ends in frustration. Care must be taken to see that bibliographic data bases do not compound the problem by identifying sought-for resources but then not providing actual access to them.

The Free Library is already involved in bibliographic data banks and inevitably will become more so in the future. However, it must be stressed again that this first category of automated aid will not itself add to the basic holdings of the Library but will simply provide better access to what is already there and to printed materials that will be acquired in the future. This is the more effective traditional library, using a new technology for what it has always done.

Information Data Bases

The second category of automated information presents a different picture and a more complex problem as to the future role of the Library. At this point we are dealing not with guides to resources already in the collections, but with additions to the Library's body of knowledge, albeit not in the customary print form.

This is the category of automated information for which a large business and home market is predicted, with individuals subscribing directly for access and receiving information by means either of an attachment to the television set or by means of a small computer connected to the telephone line. Both means have the critical advantage of convenience: data comes directly to individuals -- they do not have to go to libraries or other sources to get it.

But an economic factor will determine how widespread home and office reception of information will become and will affect the place of the Library in automated information provision. Additional equipment must be purchased to receive machine-readable data and the automated information services paid for on a regular subscription basis. Some homes, offices and organizations will obtain the equipment and will subscribe to all or most information banks needed, even as some homes, offices and organizations maintain substantial collections of books and magazines which meet all or most of their print needs. A larger number of individuals will subscribe to some automated information services, those that they consult frequently, but not to others that they need only at

intervals, even as many homes have some of the reading materials they want but turn to libraries for additional sources. And some homes will not acquire any automated information sources, whether because they do not have the means to do so or because they do not anticipate use for the service.

The cost factor in information access applies in particular to the many residents of Philadelphia who have low incomes. While the costs may not be high -- in time decoders will be built into new television sets and newspaper-like information will be part of the package marketed by cable TV -- they will be beyond the means of some people. Here is where The Free Library can serve many residents of Philadelphia who have never used the Library, not providing them with books which they may resist but with information they themselves seek in their daily lives.

As has been the case with books, the public library will be the supplementary source of automated information for many individuals and the only source for some. Book publishing -- even publishing in low-cost formats -- has not eliminated the need for libraries, and automated sources -- particularly relatively expensive sources -- will not eliminate the need for a community information center.

The Free Library now furnishes two information data bases, both of which are used substantially. VICS (Vocational Information through Computer System) provides guidance about some 450 occupations and about the education required and the sources of that education. The New York Times Information Bank, while basically a bibliographic

tool, also furnishes information directly by means of factual abstracts that accompany the citations given; what the inquirer seeks to know can often be obtained directly from the printout, without consulting the sources cited. Some of this information supplements the Library's resources, but in other instances the machine-readable information duplicates what already stands on the shelves; in the latter case the greater convenience and accessibility of the data base information is the determining factor in its use in preference to standard print sources.

This matter of relationship and overlap between regular printed reference materials and computerized information constitutes another significant influence on the library of the new technology. Obviously there is no need to provide (purchase, process, shelve) the same information in two formats. For example, if and as telephone directories come into machine-readable form (a likely prospect in the next few years), there is no need to retain bulky phone books and to go through the repeated procedure of replacing them as new issues appear. The example makes a general point. In the next ten years, if The Free Library genuinely participates in computerized information provision, certain parts of its print holdings can and should be transferred to computer memories. Business and financial information (on companies, products, stock transactions) will shortly be computerized, and presents a similar displacement issue. This process will continue to the point where the frequently used information sources in the Library will be in computerized rather than book form. At the same time, some of the printed sources must be retained, because older information will

continue to be requested. Here is another point where all of the staff must be involved, lest two parallel and duplicate information programs emerge within the Library, one in print form and the other quite separate in electronic form.

One of the distinctive advantages of automated information is the provision of very current and up to date information. A significant part of the factual demand on the public library is for just this kind of current data. Such information, put into standard reference sources, can well be out-of-date before the books are printed, acquired and processed. In fact, reliance on printed sources has been shown to be the source of misinformation purveyed by libraries.[1]

Home and office information delivery systems have been developed in Great Britain, on the continent, in Japan, and in Canada. In the United States several are now in the trial stage. One of these, termed The Source, depends on small computers for reception, and is currently being tested in selected libraries. The more likely reception hardware is the television set, because the TV attachment is less expensive than a computer; data is transmitted either by telephone or cable television lines to the TV receiver. Teletext is a one-way system of this type, with limited data, but economical in cost. Videotext is a two-way system which permits the viewer to interact to get the exact information wanted, and also has provision for direct purchase of products exhibited, which will give the system a commercial

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1 Crowley, Terence and Thomas A. Childers. Information Service in Public Libraries. Scarecrow, 1971.

boost through advertising.

The long-range prospect is that current, daily data (weather, news, sports, shopping information, stock market quotations) will channel through cable TV and on the home television screen, without involvement of the Library. Information outside this mass-market material will also be computerized but available at extra cost, at which point many people will turn to the public source, either "in" the Library or "from" the Library by electronic means.

OCLC, which The Free Library already uses for cataloging data, will shortly begin testing a videotext system called Channel 2000 in Columbus, Ohio as part of its ambitious program for "Home Delivery of Library Services." Users will be able to access the automated catalogs of the Public Library of Columbus and Franklin County and of Denison University, a computerized encyclopedia, and information about local health services, as well as the usual sports, news and weather information, and the 2000 computer programs in the Source System. Channel 2000 is a promising example of the Library as a home information provider.

This concept can be pushed further with the library serving as "manufacturer" or "publisher" as well as distributor. The Free Library will have its own information bank in the form of a computerized catalog of holdings. From this base subject bibliographies can be produced on demand. Another possibility is compilation by the Library of a Philadelphia data base, covering census information, a directory of government offices, planning

agency information, an inventory of cultural organizations, and local educational and recreational opportunities. A service already exists (CRIS - Community Resources Information Service) which provides part of this data, and the Library should relate any efforts on its part with this venture. A comprehensive project of this kind should not be undertaken lightly because the original compilation must be thorough and the maintenance of the base to keep it up to date is very demanding of time. Yet such a central, single record of Philadelphia information would be a vital resource in the City, and should be considered if funds could be obtained specifically for the purpose.

Separate from in-house records, the Library will also be subscribing to information data bases compiled elsewhere. All of these sources could be packaged and made available as the Library Data Bank. Single-inquiry and short-term access would be provided without charge on terminals within the Library, in the central building, regionals and branches. But some individuals, rather than buying for themselves each of several sources which they need regularly, and rather than depending on library visits for access, may well be prepared to subscribe to the Library Data Bank if information could be received directly in the home or office. They would gain access not to one but to several commercial data bases, and in addition to the Library's catalog and its offshoots, and to local governmental and organizational information. As few as 10,000 subscribers, paying $100 per year, would yield $1,000,000 annually to help underwrite the system. This prospect is several years away, many questions of cost and rights would have to be

worked out, but it illustrates the fresh avenues that open once the computerized data road is followed with resolution.

The Free Library, if it chooses, can be an important participant in automated information distribution, both as information compiler and information distributor. If the Library accepts information provision as a priority objective, it has little choice except to go this route.

Philadelphia will shortly be covered by cable television, the most likely electronic channel for automated information distribution. By regulation the cable vendors must reserve designated channels for public-service purposes. The Free Library can gain access to one or more channels for information service if it prepares now for this opportunity; if it waits until the cable system is completely in place it is likely to find that other information sources have been picked up to satisfy the public-service regulation. It is not wishful thinking to anticipate a library channel on cable TV with many Philadelphians viewing "Information Update from The Free Library" sometime in the course of each day.

The gathering of current information involved in such a prospect is not new to public libraries. One can get into the agencies today and search out data about government regulations, business trends, cultural and sports events, consumer products and commodity prices, community affairs, election campaigns, and other current interests. Occasionally such information is gathered and packaged

by libraries (but not The Free Library) in the form of bulletins and radio annoucements.[1] What is new in this prospect is dissemination of knowledge directly to people, in their homes and offices, at the time when they seek it, and over the electronic channels that have become part of everyone's life. If this step is taken the public library will be not only a study resource for a minority but a working resource for the majority, not only a storehouse at a distance but a convenient utility immediately at hand.

The Free Library has made an initial commitment in the field, it is gaining experience with computerized data, and it is about to build a machine-readable catalog. If this is the beginning of a continuing and accelerating commitment, based on priority accorded to information dissemination, the future place and adequate financing of the institution, if not assured, are certainly enhanced.

There is no question but what the new information technology will affect the Library, either positively or negatively. The choice is, on the one hand, to hold back and reach when much of the new system is in place, hoping to find a small niche at some point, or on the other hand to participate actively in these formative years, thus contributing to some extent to one of the most important developments of the immediate future, and also controlling its own destiny in the process. Action taken or not taken by the Library in the next five years will determine whether

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1 An example worth studying is the "News for the Consumer" series issued by the Plainedge Public Library on Long Island, New York, which is approaching its fiftieth issue and is distributed by mail.

it is a participant in or a victim of a computerized information society.

At the same time, the approach must be realistic and hard-headed. It is easy to picture all Americans as living "by the facts" as delivered on their TV screens, but this is an ideal that will not be realized. It is tempting to picture all information lines as converging through the Library, but this will never be the case. Selectivity must be exercised in the data bases acquired by The Free Library and in the information compiled for electronic dissemination. The Library will not seek to provide either a newspaper or an evening TV news program on the day's events; its place is background data that clarifies and explains what is going on. Compiling of data bases by the Library itself must be recognized as most expensive and demanding.

It will take some years for The Free Library to find its role in computerized information provision and to get its system in working order. But if priority is given to this, the agency could have a place in information provision in Philadelphia that it has never had in the past. This is part of the revitalized Free Library of 1990.

Full Text Data Bases

Information data bases store specific pieces of information. They do not hold the full text of the sources of data, nor do they contain -- to this point -- whole articles and books.

Yet the theoretical capacity is there. A library is a storage

facility in which recorded knowledge has been gathered. Further, it is a retrieval structure, with materials organized and arranged for use. Conceivably computers could hold library collections, page by page and book by book. The advent of low-cost video discs, with 54,000 frames per disc, bring this into sight. The content of the materials would be cataloged for retrieval. Access would be at many terminals. Think of the advantages: no need for a large storage building, no loss of materials, indexing of contents in greater depth than in traditional catalogs, access at a distance, direct user-collection contact without personal staff services which now require so much of the library budget, printout at terminals so that users could have their own copies of the text.

If and as automated textual accessibility becomes feasible, the very concept of the library as "the place of books" or the "place of recorded knowledge" will be altered. There will still be the library in concept, and essential functions of the librarian will remain -- evaluating and selecting material and organizing it for use. But the library as "place" or building will fundamentally change. The collection will be in computers; access will be at remote terminals with printout capacity. There will be limited need for a building to hold books or for a place in which to consult them. This prospect is somewhere beyond the year 1990 and will no doubt be the occasion for other "long-range plans."

Will the library of the 21st century be in a building or in

a computer? The answer will depend on economic factors more than on technology. Cost will be determined by the relation of investment to demand; if volume of use is high enough, cost per use may be moderate and textual computer storage will increase.

To date the perceptible demand has not been great enough to justify heavy investment, either in hardware or software. Experiments in the 1960's with facsimile textual transfer at a distance showed limited demand and high unit costs -- $62.00 per article delivered in a New York State program.[1] At present the cost per user-document contact in The Free Library is in the range of $1.75-$2.00. Conceivably demand for computerized text will increase enough in the future, and the cost of equipment decrease enough, to close this gap, but at best this is some distance down the road.

Other unresolved questions are involved in that long range prospect. How can copyright be handled under the law recently passed, when copies of publications can be obtained at the flick of a switch? To what extent can the use of computer terminals, either in the library or elsewhere, be made self-service by users and to what extent will expensive staff assistance be necessary? On a broader scale, just what new technology and new systems will emerge in the next decade? The Library must "hang loose" and be flexible as it moves into both computerized information and computerized text distribution, learning as it goes, building on that which works.

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1 Nelson Associates. The New York State Libraries pilot program in the facsimile transmission of library materials. New York, 1968

IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INFORMATION PROGRAM

The information provision program for The Free Library for the next ten years grows out of these various developments and prospects. The foundation must be a long-range commitment to the emerging technology and structure that, one way or another, will transform one of the longstanding functions of the Library, that of furnishing factual data based on reliable sources. Of the many proposals in this report, this one will in time have the greatest impact on the institution. It will also require the longest period of planning and experimentation to get the Library ready for the 1990's and beyond.

Preliminary Steps, 1982 and 1983

- complete the establishment (already underway) of a separate Computerized Information Department, this unit to provide most of the service coming from computerized information sources during the two years, and thereafter to serve as the nucleus for data services that reach out to Central departments, regional libraries, and branches.

- establish a computerized information planning and development subunit within a new general Planning and Development Office, as proposed in the next section of the report.

- tie into the Library's emerging information structure the present project to produce a machine-readable catalog of library holdings, which in essence will be a computerized

bibliographical data base comparable in purpose to data bases that are and will be acquired from the outside.

- prepare the case for a library channel on cable TV, and start working with cable entrepreneurs in planning programs.

- search out special public funds to start in fiscal 1984 to build an informational facility for Philadelphia (and hopefully for the region and State as well), while using regular appropriations to maintain the four priority services previously outlined; these can properly be thought of as capital funds, not for building a physical structure but for building an information utility.

Steps in Building the Information Center, 1984-1989

- acquire bibliographical data bases that meet user needs and provide access to materials held by the Library, starting with the resources of the present computerized information unit.

- explore the possibility of generating topical bibliographies as offshoots from the Library's computerized catalog which should be in place by 1984.

- install connections from the emerging Information Center to terminals in all units of The Free Library system.

- move on to information (as distinct from bibliographical) data bases, probably starting with financial data, telephone directories, population counts, sports statistics,

directories of association and societies, and short-entry encyclopedias, which will be in machine-readable form and available from vendors by 1985.

- market the Library's computerized catalog, either directly from the Library or through information retailers.

- take the lead in organizing a coordinated data base of Philadelphia-area information, working with local government offices and existing suppliers in the area.

- tie in with Philadelphia and area-wide programs for home and office delivery of information, establishing the Library as a significant source of part of the data sought by commercial and public vendors.

- consider a vendor role of its own, in the form of a Library Data Bank available by subscription for remote reception beyond Free Library outlets.

- throughout these developments, involve service staff and administrators in an ongoing, high-level in-service training program.

- watch the development of textual data bases for the time when demand and cost come into a practicable balance.

This program involves a preparatory stage in the immediate future, an exploratory stage in the mid-1980's, and a firm program by the end of the decade when various technological, cost and jurisdictional matters will have been settled.

The recent decision of The Free Library to create a central and separate computerized information services department is sensible as an interim form of organization. The Library needs more experience with handling and providing service from automated data bases and can best gain this experience in a single unit. Volume of use is not great enough to this point to justify maintenance of terminals in many departments. And departmental staffs, being only partly familiar with the new sources, are not yet ready to extract maximum return from them.

However, if the long-term purpose of this separate unit is to shift the service task from subject depatments, this important development will not flourish in The Free Library, no matter how devoted the staff in the separate division. Computerized data, both bibliographic and factual, should in the long run be integrated as closely as possible with the present resources of the Library. Users and librarians alike need both the traditional and the new structure and should learn to use them interchangably. Concentrating computer terminals in a separate department will limit this expanding resource to a marginal role. It will be used only by a small elite who learn of the new format and not by the bulk of users who could benefit from automated information. At best it will result in one more step in the searchers' arduous task of getting libraries to work, as they are passed on to still another service point. Further, interrelations between existing collections and new computerized acquisitions will be much more difficult to maintain, so that each will go off in its own direction. Centralization in this instance will mean isolation, with information that happens to be in machine-readable form off in one room, and the rest of

the Library comfortably confined to print. Both parties will suffer, the separate unit because many potential users will not get through to it, and the subject departments because they will be isolated from a growing resource.

Form departments are a convenience to librarians and to a very small group of users, but not to the bulk of people that a public information agency should reach. Even as the existence of a distinct Films Department, for all its good works, has slowed down the movement of The Free Library into the multimedia age, so the long-term continuation of a separate and circumscribed automated information department will retard the Library's movement into the computer age.

As experience grows, and as use builds up, the right time for re-establishing terminals in subject departments should be determined. Thorough orientation of staff must occur at that time. Properly prepared, service staff members will learn to turn from printed sources to computer terminals and back again, as readily as they now shift from reference books to the card catalog and to periodical indexes. Indeed, part of what they seek from printed sources will by that time be in computerized form, and they will perforce be using terminals every day to consult the Library's own catalog. If a parallel diffusion of film occurs, library service will then be genuinely multimedia, embracing the computer, and not disjointed multimedia with information on the same topic separated by form, depending on whether it is in print, on film, or on machine-readable disc. In fact, with the development of low-cost, laser-optical video discs, carrying everything from

movies and educational lessons to automated information and printed pages, what libraries have traditionally separated into book sections and film sections and now into computer sections will come together in one medium.

A central receiving point will still be needed for data bases (an "acquisition" unit), but access will be in departments, regional libraries and branches. Users at that time will no more be sent to a computer section than librarians today would consider an organization that would require sending users to a separate book section.

What is needed is a central planning and development unit in the Free Library (as described in the final section of the report), one subdivision of which will be responsible for researching, initiating, and nurturing new automated information services. The task of this group will be to keep up on all developments in the field, recommend those that should be considered by the Library, oversee the installation of new components, evaluate systems once they are in place, and instruct staff in the use of new facilities. Without such a planning unit (over and above staff providing service from existing data bases), opportunities will be missed, mistakes will be made, new systems will malfunction, and service staff throughout the Library will become disillusioned with the new tool.

One prospect is for "public" information systems in which The Free Library will be more than consumer, actually participating in design and in compiling data for computerization, but in conjunction with other agencies. This is occuring in Washington, D.C., where

the Martin Luther King Library is currently planning with the National Science Foundation and television station WETA for a teletext information system. After all, while the library may not be a veteran in automated data, it has long been in the information business, it has extensive factual sources, and it is in contact with people in all walks of life; the agency comes to the planning table with strong cards and service savvy.

Or the Library may even play the role of vendor itself, purchasing access to a variety of data sources, adding a few of its own making, thus building a Library Data Bank. The Bank would be fully and freely available within the library system, and also would be "on the market" for those who want it within immediate reach. This is the most complex of the several prospects, and may or may not materialize.

No one future organization should be predicated at this time for automated information; flexibility is needed in dealing with an evolving commodity. Here again a planning and development unit within The Free Library is necessary to search out and test the landscape as it unfolds.

All this will take money. Even the short-term step of a central automated information department in The Free Library to handle present data bases requires funds. If this step, as well as the later stages of (1) establishing a planning and development unit, (2) eventually integrating computerized information into the service programs of subject departments, regionals and branches, and (3) opening dissemination channels directly to people, must

wait upon available money in a very tight budget, many years will go by without significant progress. The opportunity for the Library is so great, and the need of an automated information system in Philadelphia so important, that it should not depend on the few dollars that might be squeezed out of "regular" operations. If this strategy is followed, the status quo will prevail over a new revitalization.

It is proposed that distinct sums be obtained to build a library automated information center for Philadelphia, for the region, and if possible for the State. Earmarked funds were recently obtained for internal computerization of the Library's catalog; similar financial support is proposed for external information automation. The case can be made that such a facility is not just a modernization of the Library's operations but actually a significant new ingredient in the revitalization of Philadelphia, its industry, its neighborhoods, and its personal quality of life. A large part of the money should come from the City of Philadelphia -- despite the straightened tax situation -- as an investment in its future. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania should also be involved, and to the extent that it is The Free Library's Data Bank would become a state-wide as well as a city and regional facility. Once data is on the wires, it can readily be transmitted across city boundaries, throughout the metropolitan area, and on to libraries and communities at a distance. In the initial stages, federal LSCA money (assuming this program is continued) might be used for the State's share.

Local foundations and organizations have a stake in this development. Business firms and cultural organizations will benefit from it. And individuals, both inside and outside of Philadelphia, might be prepared to contribute to a Library Data Bank that will improve the area and help all people within it. However, primary dependence should not be placed on private funds. They might be called on for particular parts of a comprehensive information program. But the bulk of financial support should come from public sources, for a public commodity.

Specifically, it is proposed that a sum of $250,000 per year for each of the next two years -- $200,000 from the City and $50,000 from the State -- be obtained for the preparatory period. This will establish the separate Computerized Information Department in the Library, finance a two-person (coordinator and secretary) subunit within the new Planning and Development Office, and permit experimentation with a few additional data bases. Then, beginning in fiscal 1984, one million dollars a year should be available for five years to build the Information Center. At the end of that time the larger sums needed for continued operation will be an integral part of the Library's general budget, with computerized services in all forms commanding that part of total expenditures needed to support the scope of service they demonstrate they can provide most effectively and efficiently. By that stage the information arm may merit up to 25 percent of library outlays.

From the City's standpoint this means an investment of $4,000,000 to $5,000,000 (depending on the portion carried by the

State) to build the information utility that one way or another Philadelphia is going to need. This might well be handled as a capital investment.

Money for maintaining and continuing the information dissemination system will thus come from three sources: the City of Philadelphia to maintain a service vital to its economic and community life, from the State of Pennsylvania for a facility that could be accessed from their own localities by information seekers across the State, and from subscription fees on the part of individuals, firms and organizations that seek convenient, immediate use of the whole range of data bases.

All this is not the Library as usual. We start in 1980 with a few terminals and computer use in the Library by a few thousand people a year, and are to end up ten years hence with an Information Center that reaches most people in Philadelphia and some beyond. A new structure of service and newly-oriented staff are involved. But the purpose of the present study is not to see how the Library can preserve its past but how it can best serve in the future.

The new information technology has a dynamic of its own. Agencies that want to participate in the dynamic must embrace the concept. Libraries which only dabble, adding a few terminals and acquiring a few data bases, will be left behind. If The Free Library makes only this limited commitment, it will by 1990 be the institution in Philadelphia for older information in archaic form.

IV. IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN — PAGE

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The building blocks of a management plan for the next years were presented in the preceding two sections of the report. The foundation for effective administration is made up of goals and functions, a clear sense of where the Library is heading and agreement on the activities that will take it there. On this basis managers can stand firm and make their plans for organization, staffing, service facilities, and financing.

This section of the report will outline the moves necessary for carrying out the program previously set forth. Some of these steps have already been stated or implied; others grow out of the service plan and will be described in this final section. Details will not and can not be laid down, first because competent and seasoned administrators have their own methods and styles, and also because they must be free to react to new conditions and opportunities as they arise. This will not be a textbook review of the principles of management but a specific working list for Free Library administrators.

Key elements in the effective management of The Free Library in the 1980's will be (1) drawing disparate groups into the planning process (really a continuation of what has been started in the present study), and (2) perseverance in the face of objections that will be raised during the transition period. This is not an easy or common combination, for on the one side it involves empathy with various interests and on the other it requires hard-headed determination when forces seek to push the Library off course. The combination becomes possible when it rests upon a deep

dedication to service, as is amply demonstrated in the present administration of The Free Library.

TWO STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Through the 1980's The Free Library must move through two stages, first a two-to-three year period of transition, and then a four-to-five year period of consolidation. The first stage will be a time of change, from an agency trying to do too much with too little to an agency focussing its money, its resources, its time, and its ingenuity on a limited number of priorities. The second stage will be a period of strengthening within the areas of emphasis, a building up within priorities to the point where performance is at a quality level and reaches all Philadelphians who need information and the record of knowledge.

The first stage will be the more difficult because it involves a change of direction. Institutions want to continue as they have in the past, and the longer the past the stronger the tendency. Most staff members prefer to work in familiar rather than unfamiliar modes. Users -- which means the portion of the public which uses the Library as it stands -- protest when some facilities are taken from them and before they can see the improved facilities being prepared in their place. And financial authorities for a period are unsure just what their money is buying from an agency in transition. For these various reasons institutions tend to grow, reach a peak, and then decline -- for these reasons government

offices that started out as service sources end up as bureaucracies. The program proposed here will prevent both decline and self-perpetuation.

Strong leadership is needed to redirect a library, even to the modest extent recommended in this report. All parties -- city officials, library trustees, general administrators, middle managers -- should be dedicated to the agreed course of action. Staff, or at least a sizable contingent within the staff, should enlist in the cause and thus also provide leadership. A course must be set and then held to, with command and troops marching together.

This means that a preliminary step will be discussion and review of the present report. An exchange about its major recommendations should take place between library officials and both the legislative branches of the city government. Parallel discussion will take place within the Board of Trustees and within the Director's cabinet (Chiefs and Coordinators). A wider group that should be drawn into the review is the Planning Council that was set up for the present study, consisting of trustees, administrators, staff, and Friends of the Library. The results of these various deliberations will go back to the Trustees and Director for final decisions.

Unanimous agreement on every point in this report is hardly to be expected. Inevitably there will be differences of opinion. The plan laid down does not necessarily have to be accepted intact and complete in every detail. Essentially the function of a

document such as this is not to provide an exact blueprint but to move planning within the agency towards a conclusion and to the point of action; it will serve its purpose if it leads to modified conclusions that get the Library moving again.

But at some early point, after due deliberation, those finally responsible for the Library will have to reach decisions. The one danger to avoid is that of trying to take account of every objection and in the process ending up where the project started, with an agency lacking a plan for the 1980's. Dialogue extended too long becomes verbiage.

Once agreement is reached, the transition stage can be pursued vigorously. This is not just a matter of issuing orders and accomplishing change by fiat. The various units involved within the Library must be drawn into the transition -- department heads in the particulars of strengthening central services with increased book funds and staff, regional librarians to prepare for the added load that will be placed on these agencies, the Office of Work with Children in designing the concentrated juvenile program, the Office of Work with Adults and Young Adults in fashioning a coherent educational program, the branch librarians in deciding on the major interest areas of their communities. For those drawn in, this will be an exciting and rewarding experience, even though they will have to neglect some regular tasks in order to get the job done.

Because users become impatient during protracted periods of change, the tactic of "an early touchdown" should be employed.

Some tangible result should be shown fairly early in the game. One possibility is to promptly divert half of the 1981-82 branch book funds into immediate assembling of several Local Action Collections and get them out into branches, where they will stand as symbols of the strengthening of resources to occur under the new plan.

The second and later stage of consolidation, from 1984 and through the decade, will be more of a march forward than a period of change. With priorities in order and resources re-deployed, most staff members will find the long pull compatible with their desire for improved service. The exception will be computerized information provision and dissemination, which will take a longer time to bring to fruition and which will depend on getting special funds. It is this latter development that will add a new dimension to The Free Library and in time will permeate aspects of the institution that now seem remote from computer assistance.

ORGANIZATION

The Free Library has able and responsible administrative leadership. This has been a rough decade for senior officers, a period of retrenchment rather than expansion. Pressures have been exerted from several sides -- from a city administration seeking to balance its budget, from city council members and community groups seeking to get branch libraries in their neighborhoods, from users concerned about decreased hours, and from staff growing

restless in the face of shortages. The general administrators have kept their balance, for the most part protecting the essential strength of the Library, and even managing to carry through an extensive rehabilitation of the central building and to launch a project for computerization of the catalog. The two members of the top team complement each other, one strong in external relations, in working with the trustees, and in providing direction, the other strong in service planning and staff relations.

Planning and Evaluations

However, in good faith the general administration (Director, Deputy Director, Division Chiefs, Coordinators) can be faulted on two counts:

- long-range planning has been neglected, including thorough planning of budgets.
- evaluation and measurement as critical steps in the administrative process have for the most part been lacking.

The first of these is reflected in a lack of clearly defined long-range goals, and in turn of specific objectives to be achieved in discrete periods of time. To the extent that the Library has been proceeding according to plan, it is a plan fashioned 25 years ago with little adjustment for the Philadelphia of the 1970's and 1980's. Precise and recently-reviewed policies are rare, whether for book selection, central services, branch programs, or educational activities. Much of what is done is determined by what was previously done and not by design. Within this framework, budgets are essentially projections of previous expenditures, cut back where expedient as inflation drains purchasing power.

Evaluation has long been a weak link in library administration, and this applies to The Free Library. Because objectives are not set, performance cannot be measured. Service programs are launched without reviewing results. Branches are opened without any survey of what the potential is within a community. Few standards exist for quality and quantity of performance by individual staff members. The one measure used is circulation, but always with the qualification that it does not measure all that goes on and with the further qualificaiton that circulation as such is not the aim of the Library. Once again the result is a tendency for projects and service units to continue in their appointed ways, without any feedback indicating whether change should be considered.

To meet this problem of planning and evaluation, it is proposed that a Planning, Development and Evaluation Office be established in The Free Library. What this organization needs is an intellectual scouting arm, to explore new territory, to bring back reports on what is over the horizon, thus enabling the command to order the next advance. Without this the officers do not know which way to turn, they cannot go out on scouting expeditions themselves, so the institution stands still.

In one sense planning cannot be delegated, in that major goals and direction of development must in the end be set by the director of an enterprise. But once direction is established, a planning officer and staff can research the prospect, propose guidelines, communicate with staff, and oversee the development stages. The Director and Deputy Director are hard pressed with

relations outside the Library and with the myriad internal problems that cannot be handled within divisions, and this will increase during the coming transition stage. If the details of planning come back to them, if development once decided waits on their intervention, these essential steps will not be taken, no matter how herculean the efforts of the officers. The proposed Planning, Development and Evaluation Office will be their arm for change.

This planning and development office will engage in small-scale experiments preparatory to launching larger projects, testing the ground, noting what succeeds and fails, determining costs. For example, the point has been made that the library of the future will disseminate as well as asemble information. To test this out even before electronic circuits are in place, the development unit, working with the Mercantile Library, could prepare a monthly business update bulletin and distribute it initially to a selected group of business firms and industries, or the same experiment could be tried with a bulletin for community and neighborhood leaders. The experience gained in information dissemination would then be applied when the shift is made to electronic (Cable TV?) distribution.

The office will also play an initial role in budget-planning, conferring with line officers as to needs, gathering data, and setting proposals before the Director. This procedure should get underway in the summer months, just as the new fiscal year starts, so that proposals can come to the general officers by autumn, thus allowing time for consideration before requests for the next fiscal year must go to the city administration.

A subdivision within the Planning Office will be devoted to development of computerized information service, the primary project of The Free Library during the 1980's. The assistant head of the office will handle this assignment. The regular Computer Information Department will be responsible for service from data bases currently used, while the Planning and Development unit will be responsible for new bases, for relating the computerized catalog to the outside sources used, and for working out plans for dissemination first throughout the library system and then on a wider scale.

After the many demands of the transition period are under control, the new office will then move on to the missing link of evaluation. This is the step that completes and renews the administrative circle. Goals have been set, functions defined, organization established, money obtained, staff positions filled, and service given. Now the question is how well the job is being done. Depending on the answer to this question, any or all of the steps in the management process are confirmed or adjusted, and performance improves. Periodic evaluation is the source of self-renewal.

To the extent possible, evaluation should be quantitative, becoming measurement rather than opinion. Various examples can be given for The Free Library. How long does it take to process books through acquisition and cataloging -- how long should it take -- what staff is needed to achieve this goal -- after staff is provided, is the goal achieved? The same line of analysis is

desperately needed for the sending of overdue notices. At an earlier point in this report, a "hit" rate for materials sought of 29 percent was found. What rate should be aimed at -- after adjustment of resources, is the higher objective attained? A proposal is made here for a special program to hold high-school seniors as users after they graduate -- how many are actually still with the Library after two years?

Evaluation efforts of the Office of Planning, Development and Evaluation will in time affect practically all aspects of the Library. Statistics kept should be reviewed. Why not attendance figures for all units, showing just how much the agency is used? Reference counts have recently been extended to include any kind of inquiry, including simple directional questions -- this bolsters the total so that the figures are comparable with other libraries, but does it analyze what is occurring at reference desks? A few libraries go a step further and test the quality of reference service, the accuracy and thoroughness of responses, either by means of self-analysis or of "anonymous shoppers." All new projects should have data sources built into them, so that the judgement can be made in due time as to whether to continue, change, or discontinue. Standards need to be developed, both for service units and for performance of individuals, drawing for the purpose on work on library measurement going on across the country.[1]

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1 As reported in such publications as:
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The result of this effort? General administration will have a clearer sense of just what the agency is doing or not doing. Division, department and branch heads will receive regular evaluative reports which will enable them to reallocate resources and staff and to modify service programs on the basis of progress made and not made. And city authorities will be able to learn what their library accomplishes.

The position of head of the Planning, Development and Evaluation Office will be demanding and will not be easy to fill. Familiarity with management methods and with statistics will be necessary. Even more difficult to find, the individual must be a person of ideas, of an exploratory turn of mind, and yet a person who will work within the parameters set by the directing officers. Also the individual must be able to work with line officers throughout the Library while at the same time measuring their performance. It will be a strategic position, and one that will markedly extend the range of the Director and Deputy Director.

An analogy to the proposed Office of Planning, Development and Evaluation can be found in the city administration, where a planning commission and a budget office stand behind the Mayor. Without these elements, any administration loses both its grip on the present situation and its sense of direction for the period ahead.

Offices of the Coordinators

The roles and organization of the Office of Work with Children and the Office of Work with Adults and Young Adults will change

under the proposed plan, the children's unit less so and the adult unit more so. Even though the influence of both offices has waned somewhat in recent years, when the Library has lacked the capacity to carry out educational services at full level, they have in the past infused The Free Library with distinctive programs and can have at least equal influence in the 1980's.

Essentially the task of the Office of Work with Children is to be extended and intensified rather than altered. The goal, on the one hand, is to extend children's resources from print into other media; and, on the other, to reach more of the reluctant and occasional readers. The branches are to become activity centers for children, with media in all forms utilized for the purpose. Also, the upper age limit served is to be more flexible than in the past, reaching up further into the early teen years. On the other side, increased effort is to be devoted to the preschool years. The front-line troops to carry out this program will be two children's librarians in each branch, and the high command will be in the Central Office. However, room for local initiative and ingenuity is to be allowed for the troops in the field, for they will be the ones in direct contact with children of various backgrounds who may not always respond to the time-honored methods of juvenile work. During the transition period, 1982 and 1983, the positions of regional children's coordinators are to be retained, but after intensified juvenile service is in place, with a sizable contingent of professional workers in the front lines, consideration should be given to eliminating the Children's Coordinator positions in the regions. This will bring total staff assignments for

younger users more into balance in the whole Library.

The role of the Office of Work with Adults and Young Adults will change somewhat more. Its responsibilities will pick up with the last year of high-school, with an explicit program to carry this group from the school library to their lifelong source in the public library. A central and major task of the unit will be to mount and administer educational projects for the whole adult range, through the senior years, these programs to be carried out either centrally or through all or some of the branches. The present responsibility of the A/YA Office for book selection will change considerably. Selection of titles for the Central Library and for regionals will rest, as at present, with the strengthened staffs in these agencies, as an integral part of their work in subject fields. Branches will no longer select adult materials from inspection groups designated by the Office. Instead staff in the Central Office will have the strategic responsibility of assembling Local Action mini-collections, packages built around local themes and intersts, and then the Central Staff and branch personnel together will select from among the packages for each community. Preparing and maintaining the Local Action Collections will be a demanding task, and should get underway by July of 1981 in preparation for the transition period, drawing on half of the fiscal 1982 branch book funds for the purpose. Because the work of this unit will be education -- educational programs and educational collections -- it is suggested that its name be changed to the Office of Educational Services for Adults. At this level regional coordinators should be retained, because many of the

branches will lack adult librarians (about half will have two children's librarians but no adult professional, while the other half will have a third librarian, an adult worker who would work closely with the Central office).

SERVICE FACILITIES

The present report approves the retention of the three-tier structure of service outlets in Philadelphia -- central unit, regional libraries, branches. However, it proposes elimination of the overlap between the latter two levels, by removing standard adult fiction and nonfiction collections from branches (the lease "productive" parts of these agencies) and replacing them with smaller, changable, immediately relevant mini-collections.

This step will also permit sharp differentiation of what goes into each branch, so that each can adjust to its locality rather than following a standard pattern. This adjustment, along with cutbacks in provision of required reading for students and of ephemeral publications for diversional reading, will substantially extend the book and materials funds of the Library.

Regional Libraries

The regional units will carry a heavier load under this plan. Adults seeking subject materials beyond the Local Action Collections, and students with advanced term papers, will turn to them in greater numbers. Actually this has already been occurring, as a

gap has opened between the range of local interest on the one hand and the limitations of branch collections on the other. In reality the regionals are the subject libraries for parts of the City; the arrangement proposed here simply ends the unsuccessful effort of branch libraries to serve in much the same capacity.

Each of the three existing regionals should have their collections reinforced, not necessarily in the form of more different titles but in the form of the transfer of selected titles in demand from the branch collections to be replaced, thus providing duplicate copies to serve the large number of users. Instead of standing on branch shelves waiting for an occasional local "independent learner," the books will be available and used in the facility that all recognize has the task of providing such materials.

Two additional regional libraries will be needed, for South Philadelphia and for Northcentral Philadelphia. Conceivably residents of these areas could be expected to go to the Central Library if their local branch does not have what they seek. However, most of the people in these areas do not have advanced education (those who do would of course be welcome in the central unit), so that they do not need a very large collection and would find it difficult to use. Resources at an intermediate level will serve them better, and it is suggested that collections in the two additional units not exceed 75,000 volumes, children's materials included. A substantial part of their resources can be built up by transfer from the branch nonfiction collections to be discontinued.

It should be noted that these two additional regional libraries are another of the improvements under the long-range plan, bringing materials in greater depth to the two sections of the City that have lacked them.

The present South Philadelphia Branch is a natural candidate for the regional unit in that part of the City. It is located on the major north-south artery, roughly halfway between Central Library and the Delaware River to the south. Parking is not easy at this busy point, but several buslines go by the door. Nor will it be easy to fit the needed collection into the present structure, and extraordinary steps will be necessary to accomplish this -- such as use of the meeting area for bookstacks or reading space, and location of office and work space in adjacent rented quarters outside the library proper.

The choice is not as natural in the northern area. There are two possibilities, the Ramonita G. de Rodriquez Branch and the Lehigh Avenue Branch. The first is by far the newer building, it is located on a main street although not at a major intersection, and it has both street parking and potential off-street parking to the rear. It is the smaller of the two and will require sacrifice of the meeting area to accomodate a regional collection. In general Ramonita G. de Rodriquez is closer to the center of the City than would be ideal for a regional unit for the near north area. Lehigh Avenue Branch is a little further out, but is an old Carnegie structure in need of repairs. It is also on a main street but not at an intersection, and it also has street parking. It could be adjusted to hold a collection of 75,000 volumes. Of

the two, Ramonita G. de Rodriquez appears to be the better choice, primarily because of cost for repair and maintenance of Lehigh Avenue. This judgement should be checked before a final choice is made.

Whichever of the three units is raised to regional status, a question can be raised about social and racial barriers that would deter some people from using these locations as regionals, although no one of them is in a severly depressed area. There is no denying the existence of such barriers, but the library planner -- in the interest of taxpayers -- can hardly propose duplicate systems following racial lines. A city has to provide facilities with equal regard for all, and if some individuals elect not to use them because they don't like the people living in the vicinity, that is their loss. Actually readers of quite diverse backgrounds are now using many of the library facilities, and with no untoward effects reported -- in fact, the fear of what is on the other side is strongest on the part of people who do not cross the line. Libraries as such are not going to remove racial prejudice, but individuals of whatever background, going to a public library, cannot help but notice that those other people seem to be seeking the same kinds of materials as they themselves.

Branch Closings

The closing of some branches has been considered from time to time in recent years. There are instances where some buildings are less than a mile from each other, whereas the average distance between branch libraries in the City is about two miles. Despite

the close locations, no closings have occurred, because local people consider the nearby agency their own, they organize to resist the move, and city officials heed their plea. The close proximity of branches occurs mostly in the older sections of the City, and some were opened before the prevalence of automobiles and the present public transportation system; as newer sections were settled, branches were opened at greater intervals, and this has not resulted in decreased use in any way.

One can understand the opposition of local people to having the nearby branch taken from them. Their justified question is, "Why us -- why everything taken from us while other parts of the City go on as before?" But the response in some instances may be definite strengthening of others that are still within reach. Here are some of the possibilities to be approached in this fashion:

-Ritner Children's Branch to be closed as the programs at Passyunk and South Philadelphia are strengthened.

-Greenwich Branch to be closed as the program at Whitman is improved.

-Queen Memorial to be closed as the regional center at South Philadelphia is developed.

-Haddington and George Institute Branches to be closed as the program at Haverford Avenue is strengthened.

Two other combinations could give better service if units closed -- either Cobbs Creek or Kingsessing in one instance, and either Community or Richmond in the other. The proposed Ogontz Branch would be added to this list if it were to be built; if authorities insist that this facility be constructed and opened, without allocating an additional $100,000 annually to operate it, a polite

term for their action would be "inconsistent" and a more frank term would be "irresponsible."

The total plan proposed here will permit strengthening of branches. Certain of the neighborhoods listed above, now without any children's librarians in their existing branch, would actually have two children's librarians in a nearby agency to serve their children if these adjustments were made. The people will have to decide themselves whether they prefer a corner grocery store without the goods they seek or a center at a little distance that not only has an adequate stock but also professional guidance in its use.

The issue should be taken directly to the people involved. They should have an opportunity to consider the advantages of consolidation. The position of some may be changed, but no doubt others will continue to resist closings. If local people agreed, the change would be made, making doubly sure that the nearby improvements promised occur and occur promptly. For those that still resist, the improvements would be made in the alternate branch so that users would have improved service within reach, but improvements would not occur in the units which should not exist because of nearby resources. Local residents in the latter case would have their choice of an inadequate agency immediately at hand or of an adequate agency at a little distance. It would not be justified to put more money into branches that could in reality be closed without cutting any residents off from library sources.

Self-Service by Users

In describing The Free Library of 1980 (first section of the report), more than once the labor-intensive nature of the present service organization was noted. Provision of personal help to individual users has been a tradition of public libraries in particular. "Ask the librarian" has been a common sign, and the theme is repeated in brochures, talks to organizations, and contacts in schools.

The personal touch is all to the good -- if this is the only way that needed material can be located. But working within the tradition, staff in The Free Library has neglected to first give close attention to impersonal measures to guide users. The newcomer to the Library and the experienced user venturing into new fields have no choice except to inquire of staff. At the beginning of 1980 The Free Library changed its method of recording questions asked by the public, counting not only "professional" inquiries (requiring consultation of resources) but also including simple directional questions; the count for the system jumped well over 100 percent and almost tripled in the Central Library. In other words, half or more of the time of staff stationed at service desks is devoted to routine directional questions.

The Central Library can be taken as a case in point. Follow relative newcomers as they enter the building. The imposing lobby until recently had no directional signs to service departments. Now there are signs for departments, which will help if visitors

can readily fit their particular topics into the dozen or so departments named. If not, there is no index or guide to help them do so, whether the interest is psychology or ancient history or jobs or sports or anthropology or a host of other subdivisions of Knowledge. Just which broad subject departments do they pick for such interests? There should be a directory, in leaflet or chart or electronic form, to provide the right steer at this point. There is a floor plan in the lobby -- for the first floor only -- on the back of a bulletin board located in a corner. A table holds folders describing some but not all of the departments. There is no general folder describing the organization of service in the building (such a folder is available on the second floor, but it is markedly out of date). The visitors, having some background in library use, follow the sign to the catalog on the second floor. This may well be the largest catalog they have ever seen, so they look above the cases and then into a few drawers to see if there is any guidance in using this monolith, but with no success. They turn to likely departments, hoping to guess right as to where the topic they seek is located, and even if they hit rather than miss, they may be referred to another unit if what they seek is in periodical, print, film, or machine-readable form. So the story goes as the visitor seeks with difficulty and little guidance to make a connection in this great reservoir of knowledge.

At each step along the way, the librarian is likely to respond to these comments by saying "But there are staff members stationed to help -- all people have to do is ask." That is precisely the point: staff is expensive -- library service is labor-intensive.

There is no thought in this report of reducing personal professional service to users; on the contrary, professional-client relationships will be increased and deepened under the plan proposed. But the plea here is for all impersonal means of guidance that are possible. In recent years, department stores, supermarkets, banks and other commercial outlets have changed their sales and customer organizations to reduce unnecessary labor costs. Why not libraries?

The example was used of the Central Library. The branches can be used as well, except that they are not as large so that one may be able to find what is wanted by wandering. Shelves are rarely marked to show the subjects on them, but rather carry only Dewey Decimal numbers, which have little meaning to most users. Only in three instances of branch visits was any guide or diagram found to help in consulting the catalog. So the patron asks the staff member on duty, and he or she spends half the day answering questions that could have been avoided if resources were simply identified or tools simply explained.

Librarians in The Free Library -- in central, regional and branches -- should come out from behind their desks and place themselves in the position of users. Look fresh at the agency through the eyes of a not-very-experienced visitor. What guides and aids can be provided to ease the way and help the search? Preparation of the aids will take time, but once done well they will serve for long periods and save staff time every day. This is important enough to merit the effort of a task force that would outline possibilities for the whole Library, with some of the

materials to be prepared centrally and others within departments and branches. The objective is the self-service library to the extent feasible.

The matter of staff time should also be kept in mind in designing computerized facilities, whether the catalog of holdings now getting started or the future information data bank. The generation now coming out of school is much more adept at handling computer terminals than most of their elders. Others must have clear labels and directions to guide them, or automation of records will actually result in more demand on staff. The theme again is the self-service library, which will not only save staff costs but will be welcomed by many users who prefer to proceed on their own, just as they prefer going through the aisles of a supermarket rather than asking for their groceries across a counter.

STAFF

For the most part, the staff of The Free Library is adequate both in quality and quantity for the two stages of development in the 1980's. The exception to this is in the computerized information program, where both more experience and more bodies will be needed in the 1984-1989 period. But before that, to turn the Library around, two problems must be met: staff morale and more productive deployment of personnel.

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Morale

At present a good army has become disaffected. The troops lack a battle-plan and are uncertain of their objective. Individuals are unsure of their contribution to the cause. The staff must be rallied and rededicated. The long-range plan projected here is intended as a banner under which they can gather.

The uncertain morale in the staff may be inevitable under the circumstances which the Library has faced. Programs have been cut, book budgets reduced, building repairs delayed, and job security threatened -- small wonder that a majority of department heads and branch librarians rate morale as weakened in their units. Rather than being minimized by efforts of the central administration, this feeling has been nourished by limited contact with and communication to the staff, by the sense that individuals have of very centralized decision-making, and by inability on the part of personnel to participate in planning. Staff members feel that they take the brunt of criticism as services are curtailed, but have no way to help with the problems.

Every effort should be made to keep the channels of communication open -- even what might be called the channels of inspiration open -- both from the top down and from the bottom up. This may be the right moment, once the present report is released, to solicit suggestions from staff as to how to carry out the transition. Staff members should be encouraged to nominate themselves for positions that they see emerging in the next years. Task forces are needed to go into several questions opened up in this report: reorganization

and consolidation of central departments, integrating of periodicals and audiovisual materials with book holdings, pushing of interagency loan within the system as a means of getting materials to users. There will be a multiplicity of tasks to be done in the next two years; individuals should each have a place in the advance, an assigned task where they can make their impact felt. The several staff groups -- the unions and the Staff Association -- should be consulted regularly, not to maintain pro forma contact but to determine the contribution that workers are prepared to make and the recognition and rewards they should receive.

If the senior officers alone try to pull The Free Library into the 1990's, they will fail. Middle managers and service staff must be enlisted, and there fortunately is considerable capacity left in these groups. If this is accomplished, and the Library stops slipping and starts moving ahead, morale will take care of itself. Some staff members will join the advance as soon as they get a sense of purpose, and others will follow as they see movement forward.

Pairing of Branches on Half-Week Schedules

But the troops must then be re-deployed. The ranks have thinned to the danger point. The underlying theme of "concentrate and strengthen" applies here as elsewhere. Staffs of adequate size must be brought to bear all the way from the acquisitions operation to the reference desks.

How to accomplish this without simply requesting a large increase in the personnel budget? A trade-off is proposed, which

may seem drastic at first glance, but which should be seriously considered because it will increase staff ranks throughout the Library. In fact, without this adjustment it is doubtful if significant improvement of service can occur at any point.

The trade-off proposed is a reduction in hours of service in branches in order to gain full staffing for the time the units are open. The Free Library has been moving in this direction, but tentatively at intervals as forced by fund shortages rather than in one clear-cut planned step, and in steps so small that no discernible improvement in service occurred. It was a retreat and not a trade-off -- from the standpoint of the public the reduced hours were all loss and no gain.

What is proposed is that all branches go forthrightly on a schedule of three days per week (actually two full days and a half day), with two professionals in the smaller agencies and three professionals in the busier units. One crew, composed of librarians, assistants and a security guard, will staff two branches. The crews will be assigned to adjacent outlets, and follow a schedule of Monday, Wednesday, Friday in one and Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning in the other. Each branch will be at full strength when open, with staff working within the building and out in the community. This arrangement, as a dividend, will also provide Saturday service in one of two paired outlets.

Negotiation will be necessary with staff members to work out hours and proper compensation. The work week of individuals will not be longer in number of hours, each branch to be open 17-18 hours.

But two evenings a week will be involved, and some time on six days a week, including Saturday morning. Extra compensation for this demanding schedule seems indicated, but a reasonable increment could be paid to the field crews and the Library would still come out ahead. Extra "battle pay" may even be attractive to some staff members.

There will be 22-23 branch teams or crews under this plan, each with two or three professionals and three to six nonprofessionals (including security-maintenance worker), depending on volume of business. Approximately 30 professional positions will be saved, and over twice as many library assistant positions, a total of 100. This is the source from which strengthening of staff is to occur in the system, a portion of these people going to regional libraries and the remainder to central departments including several assistants to the acquisition and cataloging operations, so that backlogs will be a thing of the past. There will be as many service units in the system as at present (or almost as many, depending on whether a few branches are consolidated as previously suggested), and each will have an increased staff complement.

In announcing this, as well as other parts of the proposed plan, the positive should be stressed. In this case a revitalized branch program can properly be claimed, with the hours when it will be available designated. This is not trying to fool anybody. The fact is that the change is to be made in order to provide better service. After all, it would be more comfortable for all concerned -- city officials and library officials and library staff -- simply to stand pat, make no changes, drift slowly down-

ward, but this easy alternative is being rejected in favor of improving service within the limited public funds available.

Part-time and Volunteer Help

Proper staffing calls for an additional approach. The Free Library has not fully exploited the possiblities of part-time and volunteer help. In a few locations within the Library such aid has been used, but then some problems in scheduling arise and this alternative is dropped for more expensive full-time personnel that is under no pressure during part of the work day and then under undue pressure during peak hours. With no part-time help available to get books back on shelves, experienced assistants and professionals alike shelve books in the slack periods, which certainly is not full use of trained staff. The day of after-school work is not gone, for either upper classmen in high school or for students in community and trade colleges.

Nor should the possiblity of part-time professional help be discounted, trained librarians raising families or semiretired but active professionals. The Research Associate for the present study worked on this basis. Such individuals can be scheduled as reinforcements for the busier periods, so that full-time help does not have to be hired, and some would welcome evening and Saturday hours.

Senior citizens constitute a promising reserve of volunteer help. Every time this question is raised, some librarian is sure to tell about one or another such volunteer who did not follow

the schedule because of illness or other reasons, and this possibility also is dropped as though that is the final word. But it happens that the author of this report falls in the senior citizen category, he has participated in projects where retired people voluntarily carried through large fund drives for hospitals, organized and now handle year-long musical concert series, and worked effectively as after-school aids for students in difficulty, and he knows that there are competent, healthy and responsible senior citizens who are looking for community activities in which they can lend a hand. Get in touch with local chapters of the American Association of Retired People and you will be surprised at the reserves which exist. Working in the Library can be an attractive community contribution for active oldsters.

Flexibility and ingenuity in the use of staff can make available funds go further. Every effort should be made to get the job done without letting personnel costs get out-of-hand.

MONEY NEEDED

The framework for this study has been the reality of municipal finance, the need to conserve and stretch the public dollar. With this in mind, recommendations have not been made for expansion of library service in several directions that might be justified -- with one exception that is so important to Philadelphia in this next period that it must be given special consideration.

Rather than expansion, the report emphasizes concentration.

Five broad service functions were put forward as the focus of Free Library efforts during the 1980's. The choice was made on the basis of services essential to (1) strengthening of the economy of the City, and (2) preserving and improving community life. Other activities, worthy as they may be as amenitites, are not to receive priority for money or time. The long-range plan does not solely call for the continuation of the five priority functions at their present weakened and inadequate level, but shows how they can be brought up to adequacy without large increases in appropriations to the Library.

In other words, the assumption was made that Philadelphia will wish to continue library functions essential to its viability and well-being. If this assumption is wrong, if the official view is that the City can get along without an effective source of information and knowledge, then these are decisions that will have to be made by responsible officials and enforced on the Library. Philadelphia could no doubt survive without strengthening of the Library's essential functions, but it will have a more difficult time doing so.

In the interest of economy, proposals have been made that will seem drastic in some quarters. The Library is no longer to supply light diversional reading, it is to work out an agreement with the schools whereby they will be responsible for required reading needed for assignments whereas the public library will provide voluntary reading materials and also resources needed by advanced students when they do independent projects and term papers, and standard adult nonfiction and adult fiction resources are to be

removed from branches in place of smaller and more relevant mini-collections on topics of special interest in each locality. As a trade-off, a further and planned reduction in hours is proposed in order to strengthen staffing for those times when the branches are open, giving full service for three days per week rather than inadequate service for four or five days.

It is a tight ship that is outlined, directed by a small administrative staff, making maximum use of personnel, concentrating on clear goals and functions. But it will be a Library that makes a difference in the life of Philadelphia.

It would be nice to go on to say that this could be accomplished while cutting the Library's budget, but this is simply impossible. Any such cuts, freeing one million or two million dollars that would soon be swallowed up in the budgets of other city departments, will forfeit the core of strength that The Free Library has managed to retain. If the contribution that the Library could make to Philadelphia in this next period would be marginal in any case, then reductions in support should be considered. But in that the stripped-down program proposed here will be central to the life of the area, the City will not act prudently unless it continues its investment in the Library and gains dividends needed for revitalization.

In financial terms, rebuilding The Free Library during the 1980's falls into two stages. A transition period is to occur from July, 1981 to June, 1983, with city appropriations to remain at the present level plus a ten percent increment for inflation each

year. This means appropriations in the vicinity of $15,000,000 and $16,500,000 respectively in the two years. City services (pensions, insurance, utilities) will continue and will no doubt also reflect a factor of inflation, so that direct and indirect cost of the Library will move past the $20,000,000 mark. These figures assume a continuation of federally-financed CETA positions at about the present level.

With these sums, The Free Library can achieve the following goals by the end of the 1983 calendar year:

1. Reorganize service programs to ensure effective performance in the five priority functions.
2. Intensify the Library's contribution to the industrial and community base of Philadelphia.
3. Lay the groundwork of a City and Community Information Center, using $200,000 of the municipal appropriations in each of fiscal 1982 and 1983 for this purpose (plus a $50,000 state and/or federal grant)

The Library will then be squared away and ready for the larger development of information services, which will require a five-year buildup. A supplementary appropriation of $1,000,000 annually for the five years will be necessary to establish at a sound level an information utility on which government, business, industry, professional groups, cultural organizations, community agencies and plain citizens will come to depend.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania would benefit by greater financial participation in the strengthening of The Free Library and the development of a computerized information center. The Free Library already serves as a state-wide resource through interlibrary loan. Every section of the state will gain as collections are

rebuilt in Philadelphia under this plan. The Library also serves as District Center for Delaware County, standing from the service standpoint as a large central unit for the various smaller public libraries over the county. Looking ahead, the whole metropolitan area and the whole state will benefit from a Library Data Bank. But the City of Philadelphia cannot be expected to build up and support such a facility that will then become available state-wide.

Pennsylvania should increase its contribution to The Free Library not so much to help Phildelphia as to help itself. The Commonwealth has fallen behind in supporting the existing state-wide program to which it has an obligation under law, payments showing no increase since 1975 (see Table 2). Now the prospect looms of gaining a state-wide information center at relatively little cost by hitching the state on to a unique facility to be built in Philadelphia. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania would make one of its most productive investments by providing $500,000 per year for the computerized information center in The Free Library, starting in 1984.

Residents of the metropolitan area outside of Philadelphia also use The Free Library, including some who neither work nor study in the City. This includes communities in New Jersey as well as Pennsylvania. The possibility was explored of a metropolitan library district of some kind to extend the financial base of the Library. There are relatively few such authorities in the Philadelphia area, and fewer yet with tax-levying authority. The problem is further complicated by the existence of two states

within the metropolitan area. There appears to be no "handle" by which to take hold of this possibility at the present time. If any movement toward metropolitan consolidation occurs, library service should be considered as a participant. Until that time, it is recommended that the nonresident fee for use of The Free Library be kept at a level that reflects the actual costs of service -- that is, take $12.00 per capita as a base, increase it by 2½ times because a borrower's card once issued can be used to obtain books for other members of the family, which works out to $30.00 at the present time.

The prospect for federal aid is uncertain. Funds under the Library Services and Construction Act have been on a plateau for some time. This money goes through the State and comes to the locality as grants. The Free Library's share has varied in recent years, the maximum being a little over $300,000, less than two percent of expenditures. Now with a new federal administration and a changed balance in the Congress, prospects for categorical grants are dim indeed. However, lump-sum payments to cities may well continue in one form or another (Revenue Sharing was recently extended for three years). And it is conceivable that the federal administration may recognize the value of strategically-located information centers across the country to revival of the economy, and The Free Library would be a candidate for participation in the network if it continues to increase its information capacity.

Application should be made for 1982 and 1983 grants from LSCA funds for planning of Philadelphia's information utility. The City should be reminded that libraries were specifically

designated as one of the reasons for revenue sharing to cities, and should therefore share in the proceeds. Beyond this it would be unwise to count on federal money in the short run, but the emergence of a national information network should be watched with care to see what role The Free Library can play.

Finally, as has been touched on previously, a campaign for private funds should be mounted. This would not be for the support of general services for the bulk of the people, which is the responsibility of public authorities. But the several special collections in the Library, of a research level, already have private support in the form of their basic resources, and might well gain operational funds from the same source. This should be a targeted campaign, aimed at the users of the several collections and at organizations which benefit from them. It is not impossible, for example, that a local family foundation would be prepared to take such an exceptional facility as the Rare Books unit under its wing. Friends of the Library groups may well help in the campaign. A goal of a half-million dollars a year for staffing and operating the special collections is within reason in an area with the rich traditions of the Philadelphia metropolitan district. If progress is not made in such an effort within a few years, there will be no choice except to seek alternative homes for this research material, for research at an advanced and specialized level is not one of the functions proposed for priority in The Free Library.

Thus the financial support needed by The Free Library can be forecast for the next few years, as shown in Table 9. Beyond this period projections cannot be made with any assurance, because of

uncertainties in the economy on the one side and inflation on the other. By 1985 it will be possible to judge the contribution of the agency under the concentrated and efficient program proposed in this report and to take a fresh look at support of the Library in light of city finances, state aid, and federal policies at that time. Assuming Philadelphia has balanced income and outlay by then, consideration should be given to a supplementary appropriation to complete the Library Data Bank, which will have been prepared for in the interval.

TABLE 9

PROJECTED SUPPORT FOR THE FREE LIBRARY

Category of Funds	Amounts		
	1982	1983	1984
City funds (appropriations and services combined)	$19,000,000	$21,000,000	$23,000,000
State funds (for Local, District, Resource and Information service, but excluding The Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and District Services for Delaware County)	1,500,000	2,000,000	2,500,000
Federal funds (CETA and grants)	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,500,000
Trust and other Private funds	600,000	800,000	1,000,000

Total financial resources of $27,000,000-$28,000,000 (exclusive of The Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and of District Services to Delaware County) by 1985 will provide a newly-concentrated Library serving the whole City and also will gain a definite foothold on information service needed over the remainder of the century. While these figures are higher than present support, they barely keep up with likely inflation; if the annual inflation rate proves to be significantly more than 10 percent, the estimates would have to be adjusted accordingly.

Beyond this the City of Philadelphia would be wise to relate library appropriations to total municipal expenditures. At present the Library receives a little less than 2 percent of the cost of local government, down some over recent years. The Free Library, as a service that directly or indirectly reaches most businesses and industries in Philadelphia and that reaches half of the residents and under this plan will reach more, requires only a small part of public expenditures. In a revitalized Philadelphia, appropriations for The Free Library should be 2.5 percent of city expenditures. At this level the City will not only be proud of its public library but will depend on it. Philadelphia and its library will then develop together.

APPENDIX: A NOTE ON METHOD

The purpose of this study was to develop a long-range plan for The Free Library, within the framework of limitations in municipal finance and of changes in Philadelphia. The purpose was not to compile extensive new research data nor to analyze internal operations of the Library in detail.

This was a relatively low-budget project. The money came from private and not from public funds. The staff consisted of a Consultant (a total of 80 days) and of two research associates (one full-time and one half-time through much of 1980).

The first months were devoted to gaining an understanding of both the Library and the City at this stage of their development. For this purpose publications and materials of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission proved most helpful, as well as studies that had been made in research centers in local universities. The thorough system of annual reports from each division of the Library also proved helpful. Statistics of the Library were analyzed for trends in use and for internal comparison between parts of the agency. Extra time had to be devoted to financial data to determine where funds go and how much the various services of the Library cost.

Question forms covering purposes, programs and problems went out to all departments, regional units and branches, with responses

from all except one. Long question forms then went to every staff member, not so much for personal data (which was available from the Personnel Office) as to get views on the strengths and weaknesses of the Library, with an 89 percent return. Information from these sources was followed up by on-site visits to all departments, regional units and branches; in some cases it was possible to spend time out in communities and to talk with community representatives. A fairly clear idea of the needs of Philadelphia and of The Free Library emerged from these sources and contacts.

A Planning Council was then assembled to work with the Consultant. The Council had 36 members, including trustees, administrators, staff, and Friends of the Library. Four meetings were held in the late spring and early summer, each for the duration of five hours. The group responded to papers presenting seven different models or alternatives for the future of The Free Library.

Tentative conclusions were reached by the Consultant during the summer, and then over several months were tested with various groups. Four meetings were held with community residents in the several sections of the City, attended by some 200 individuals. A session was held with 16 Philadelphia business leaders. By December the tentative conclusions were presented to the Trustees for reaction.

Insight from outside the Philadelphia area was brought into the deliberations in the form of three "outside consultants" with

contrasting backgrounds:

Hardy Franklin, Director, Martin Luther King Library, Washington, D.C.

G. Vernon Palmour, Vice President, King Research, Inc. (management consultants)

Robert Wedgeworth, Executive Director, American Library Association

These individuals met with the Planning Council and again in the autumn in a two-day review session. Each contributed to the emerging plan, but responsiblity for the eventual result must be taken by the director of the study.

Contact and exchange were maintained informally with officials of the Library. The Consultant conferred with the Director of the Library at intervals of approximately two weeks, and with the President of the Board of Trustees almost every month.

Essentially this has been a period of stock-taking and looking ahead, after a decade of slippage on the part of The Free Library. The study was designed as the initial stage of what should become a continuing planning process. The process has been carried in this report to the point of a proposed long-range plan. Now planning must go on, building on what is here. If this does not occur, much of the value of this study will be lost.

APPENDIX II

MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COUNCIL

John Axam	Administrative Librarian I, Extension Division
Abe Belsky	Member, Board of Trustees
Laura Clover	Librarian III, Catalog Department
Lynne Cochran	Reference and Information Librarian - Social Science and History Department
John Cunningham	Library Coordinator I, Northwest Area
Marie Davis	Deputy Director
Keith Doms	Director
Carolyn Field	Coordinator, Work with Children
Peggy Glover	Coordinator, Work with Adults and Young Adults
Cecile Goodis	Branch Librarian, Oak Lane Branch
Susan Harrison	Acquisitions Librarian
Christie Hastings	President, Friends of The Free Library
Frances Hinton	Chief, Processing Division
Susan Horn	Librarian II, OWA/YA - Book Selection
Dennis Johnson	President, Friends of the Northwest Regional
Henry Kapenstein	Chief, Central Public Services Division
Roberta Kirsch	Library Assistant II, Frankford Branch
Gayl Koster	Library Coordinator II, OWA/YA - Book Selection
Kim Lasko	Librarian II, Whitman Branch
Joseph Levandoski	Branch Librarian, Logan Branch
Vilma Lieberman	Head, Computer Based Information Center
Esther Maurer	Department Head - Education, Philosophy, Religion
Steven Mayover	Department Head - Films

Thomas McConkey	Chief, Administrative Services Division
Susan McDougall	Librarian II, Literature Department
Helen Miller	Area Coordinator, West Philadelphia
Marilyn Moody	Coordinator, District Services
Belita Motley	Librarian II, Wynnefield Branch
Florence Packer	Branch Librarian, Widener Branch
Hedra Peterman	Library Coordinator II, West Philadelphia Area
John Philbrick	President, Board of Trustees
Gail Savar	Library Assistant III, Northeast Regional
Daniel Silvert	President, Friends of The Northeast Regional
Gail Stefanski	Regional Librarian, Northeast Regional
Barbara Swann	Library Assistant II, Northwest Regional
Ola Taylor	President, Friends of West Philadelphia Regional
Alan Thomas	Chief, Extension Division